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ABNORMAL HYPNOTIC PHENOMENA

A Survey of Nineteenth-Century Cases

Edited by
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VOLUME IV
The United States of America

by
ALLAN ANGOFF

Great Britain
by
ERIC J. DINGWALL



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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

THE object of the present series of volumes is to fill a gap in the literature of hypnotism as far as a number of countries is concerned both in the Old and New Worlds. Generally speaking, accounts of alleged paranormal phenomena occurring in the mesmeric and hypnotic states have been omitted by writers on hypnotism and no detailed treatment of this aspect of the question has so far been published.

The main reason why this gap in the literature of hypnotism exists is that in the nineteenth century interest in mesmerism was aroused and maintained not only by accounts of the therapeutic value of mesmeric treatment and its use as an anaesthetic agent in surgery, but also because paranormal phenomena were said to occur with very many of the somnambules. Thought-transmission, eyeless-sight, travelling clairvoyance and mental suggestion at a distance were all said to occur constantly; and the fear of being thought unorthodox and tainted by the "occult" effectively prevented many serious men of learning from becoming too closely associated with the mesmerists, both medical and lay.

The aim here, therefore, is to raise the curtain on the almost unknown and forgotten activities of the mesmerists of the nineteenth century, while concentrating on the paranormal aspects of their work. Since reports of such phenomena occurring in the hypnotic state begin to disappear before the end of the nineteenth century and are rarely reported in the first part of the twentieth, the account of mesmerism here presented ceases at the end of the nineteenth century. Although in some countries of Europe reports of paranormal phenomena in mesmerism are far slighter than others, attempts have been made to give a general picture of the scene while paying greater attention to countries like France, Germany and England, where a mass of material exists from which it is hoped a representative collection of cases has been examined.

In each section the opinions and conclusions of the contributor are his or her own. Great care has been taken to avoid mistakes of every kind, although it cannot be hoped that a work of this magnitude will be free from errors and both the Editor and the contributors will be grateful to any readers for their corrections and criticisms.

INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the United States interest in animal magnetism and mesmerism generally was encouraged through the influence of French authors such as Deleuze and Poyen and development proceeded along customary lines. The activities of various clairvoyants were duly recorded by medical men and others, but interest in the subject was later mainly aroused through the work of Andrew Jackson Davis and Phineas Parkhurst Quimby. Malicious animal magnetism, enshrined as it was in the framework of Christian Science, colored the prevailing scene, but it was not until the end of the century, under the influence of William James, that serious scientific investigation was attempted.

The author of this section is grateful to the reference staffs of a number of organizations, particularly in the libraries of the Parapsychology Foundation, New York; the Society for Psychical Research, London; the College of Psychic Science, London; The British Museum; the Boston Public Library; the New York Public Library; and the Library of Congress, Washington. His debt to Mrs. Eileen J. Garrett, President of the Parapsychology Foundation, is very great. Throughout the many months of research, note-taking, and writing he was privileged to meet with her regularly and to discuss at great length many of the phenomena and the men and women which make up the astonishing story of mesmerism in nineteenth-century America. He is certain that any unusual interest which this survey may excite is due in very large part to the stimulating encouragement and counsel of Mrs. Garrett.

The present volume includes details of the paranormal element in mesmerism as recorded in Great Britain from 1800 to 1900. Interest in the subject was first aroused through contact with some of the French mesmerists and by lectures by such persons as Dr. Bell, who carried recommendation from some of the best known French operators. It was only in 1829 when Richard Chevenix, who had learnt much about magnetism in Paris, arrived in England that his own experiments were seen by Dr. John Elliotson who was one of the most prominent physicians of the time and became one of the most enthusiastic supporters of mesmerism. Elliotson's support of those wishing to study mesmerism, later reinforced by the interest

that James Braid took in the matter, led to a wider appreciation of the whole question, which continued up to the end of the century when mesmerism became known as hypnotism and the former paranormal phenomena of the mesmeric somnambules became mainly part of the spiritualistic scene.

The author of this section wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to the Society for Psychical Research for help and for permission to quote from certain of its publications and, amongst other institutions, to the British Museum and the Wellcome Trust.

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Hypnotism in the United States of America

by
ALLAN ANGOFF

“ My husband’s death was caused by malicious mesmerism. . . . After a certain amount of mesmeric poison has been administered it cannot be averted. No power of mind can resist it.”

MRS. EDDY, 1882.

Hypnotism in the United States

1800—1900

INTRODUCTION

MESMERISM came to America early in the nineteenth century, and throughout all the years of that century it invaded the arts of the clergyman and the physician, the traveling medicine man and healer, the mystic, the spiritualist, the clairvoyant, the literary critic and the novelist, and, finally, the founder of a religion. *From Mesmer to Christian Science* (6), Frank Podmore's survey and study published in 1909, reveals accurately by its very title the progress and growth in America of Anton Mesmer's astonishing new science from the days of the American revolution in the eighteenth century to the triumph of Mrs. Eddy and her Church toward the end of the nineteenth century.

Even before the nineteenth century began Lafayette wrote to his friend George Washington about the remarkable Dr. Mesmer whose discovery and cures were exciting wonder and controversy in the highest medical circles of Paris. Those cures were also inviting the condemnation of eminent medical men and public figures who looked on in dismay at the increasing popularity of this Austrian-born healer with sound medical credentials who obtained such impressive results with outlandish methods. But the Marquis de Lafayette ignored the more respectable—and contemptuous—opinions of his countrymen toward Dr. Mesmer. Writing to Washington from Paris on 14 May 1784 he said, "A German doctor called *Mesmer* having made the greatest discovery upon *Magnetism Animal*, he has instructed scholars, among whom your humble servant is called one of the most enthusiastic—I know as much as any conjuror ever did. . . and before I go, I will get leave to let you into the secret of Mesmer, which you may depend upon, is a grand philosophical discovery" (1, pp. 283-284).

This discovery was thereafter to become an increasingly startling

phenomenon of American life. Two countrymen of Lafayette, Joseph Du Commun and Charles Poyen, were to be its earliest teachers. Clergymen were to debate its merits, sometimes with great violence and passion. Such figures as Daniel Webster and Henry Clay were to speak highly of some forms of it. A great American physician, Dr. Charles Caldwell (1772-1853) of Louisville, Kentucky, a colleague of the even more famous Dr. Benjamin Rush, returned from Europe an enthusiastic champion of the new science. Caldwell had observed mesmerizers at work in Europe, and he was deeply impressed, for he wrote in his book, *Facts in Mesmerism and Thoughts On Its Causes and Uses* (2), published in 1842, "Never has there been before a discovery so easily and clearly demonstrable as mesmerism is, so unreasonably and stubbornly doubted, and so contumaciously discredited and opposed. . . . Yet never before has there been made, in anthropology, a discovery at once so interesting and sublime—so calculated to exhibit the power and dominion of the human will—its boundless sway over space and spirit. . . ."

Nathaniel Hawthorne the novelist was always aware of the mesmeric power and the claims made for it, particularly in *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) and *The Blithedale Romance* (1852), but he revealed his fear and abhorrence of it in 1841, when his fiancée wrote him that she was considering mesmerism as a cure for her headaches. Hawthorne begged her to shun "these magnetic miracles . . . I am unwilling that a power should be exercised on thee, of which we know neither the origin nor the consequence, and the phenomena of which seem rather calculated to bewilder us than to teach us any truths about the present or future state of being. If I possessed such a power over thee, I should not dare to exercise it; nor can I consent to its being exercised by another. Supposing that this power arises from the transfusion of one spirit into another, it seems to me that the sacredness of an individual is violated by it" (3, p. lxxv).

Other eminent Americans, such as Edgar Allan Poe and Louis Agassiz, were to be involved in the controversies and discussions regarding mesmerism in its various forms, and some Americans perhaps more notorious than eminent, including Andrew Jackson Davis and Thomas Lake Harris, must be noted in any history of mesmerism in the United States. Then there is Phineas P. Quimby, the clockmaker of Belfast, Bangor, and Portland, Maine, who achieved such repute as a mesmeric healer in the mid-nineteenth century and whose most famous patient was Mrs. Mary Baker Patterson, wife of Dr. Daniel Patterson of Rumney, New Hampshire,

a dentist, and later, after another marriage, the famous Mary Baker Eddy, founder of Christian Science. "My wife has been an invalid for a number of years," Dr. Patterson wrote Quimby in Portland 14 October 1861, "is not able to sit up but a little, and we wish to have the benefit of your wonderful power in her case" (4, p. 152). Mrs. Patterson visited Quimby in Portland for the first time in October 1862. He restored her health, this invalid of twenty-four years, by the mesmeric method, and to many historians the beginnings of Christian Science date from that visit.

All of these American figures and many more symbolize the pervading force of the mesmeric idea in the America where there was then and for years to come a great unexplored frontier, perhaps a greater gullibility, but also a greater curiosity about what Lafayette had called a philosophical discovery of the first magnitude.

As for parallel developments in Europe at that time, Dr. John Ashburner, an English physician, was proclaiming it "a force which can alleviate the most agonizing suffering—which can cure painful cancers, and other malignant diseases . . . which can raise up from the deep insensibility of the last stage of typhus fever, a dying patient. . . . May we not assert then, that through the agency of this force, God has enabled man to wield a power almost divine" (5, p. ix)?

Mesmerism in America took on many forms and had many names: animal magnetism, pathetism, electrobiology, etherology, phrenomagnetism, mental electricity, electromagnetism, psychodunamy, spiritualism, somnambulism, hypnotism, mesmeric somniloquism, electrical psychology, and clairvoyance, among others. This very profusion of names reveals, to be sure, the absence of rigid scientific standards in the America of that period, but it reveals again, as already noted, that the new nation, then as now, was curious, daring, ever willing to welcome and listen to the message of leaders of new cults.

Frank Podmore makes an even more striking observation on the mesmeric movement in America. He points out that after 1848 it began to develop in radically different fashion from that in Europe. In England and Germany particularly, mediums and others in trance accepted the power of forces above them, of those who placed them in trance, of "higher intelligences", as Podmore puts it. They knew they were dependent on the will of another. "But in the land of democracy", continues Podmore, "we are confronted with a singular development unknown to the older monarchies. The transatlantic seers constantly tend to be independent; they assume

the authority of the prophet; they grasp at spiritual autocracy . . .” (6, p. 220).

It is well to keep in mind these prescient observations of Podmore as we survey the origin, rise and progress of mesmerism in nineteenth-century America. It is to some extent a history of a multitude of individualists, each with his own emphatic views of the mesmeric force.

It is important to make these preliminary observations even though our chief objective in this study is to report, from the literature available, those examples, events and experiments in nineteenth-century America wherein paranormal faculties and powers, including thought-transference and clairvoyance, were seemingly demonstrated. Any apparent departure from this approach, such as venturing into some of the many cases in medical practice, will be only the author's method of clarifying the claims made for the supernatural. Similarly, occasional extended treatment of biographical data is made solely for the purpose of clarifying the claims made for the paranormal so widely reported during the years when mesmerists, under a variety of banners, made such a stir in America.

FRENCH INFLUENCE IN THE EARLY YEARS

The American colonists had heard of mesmerism for some years before it was practised among them. For they read the London newspapers regularly and often read there long accounts of the miraculous cures Dr. Anton Mesmer was effecting in Paris. The colonial newspapers of Boston, New York and Philadelphia also carried accounts of Mesmer's work, particularly after the plenipotentiary to the French Court, Benjamin Franklin, served on the Royal Commission of 1778 which had condemned Mesmer as a charlatan. But the first tangible introduction of the subject and art into the United States seems to date from 1815, according to Dr. Joseph Du Commun who delivered three lectures on magnetism in the Hall of Science, New York City on 26 July, and 2 and 9 August 1829.

Du Commun, a native Frenchman, was then in the United States serving as a teacher of French at the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. At those well-attended lectures he hailed animal magnetism as “a subject of vital importance to human happiness and life, and one which has given rise in Europe to vivid controversies. . . . I am confident that many among my

hearers have scarcely heard the name *animal magnetism* pronounced." He then went on to give a brief history of animal magnetism, alluding to its founder, Anton Mesmer, as "this extraordinary genius", and lamenting that so distinguished an American as Benjamin Franklin had signed the Royal Commission's famous report which had condemned Mesmer. But this was not characteristic of Benjamin Franklin, who signed the report because he had been "sick" at the time of the French investigation, said Du Commun. Despite Franklin and the Royal report, mesmerism was known to at least a few Americans when he, Du Commun, had arrived in the United States in 1815. For at that time he met with two men in New York he had first known in Europe as magnetic practitioners. The three then formed a "society of magnetizers", which soon grew to twelve members, including two doctors of medicine. All members of the new society apparently practised magnetism on patients who consulted them and, according to Du Commun, some remarkable cures were effected.

At one of the lectures Du Commun asked rhetorically, "What is meant by magnetizing?" He replied to his own question by speaking first of the fluid which manifests itself in the presence of the magnetizer before his patient. "This fluid," he said, "is seen by some somnambulists as bright atmosphere around our bodies and emanating from our fingers in the act of magnetisation, as rays of light. It may be, according to some of them, concentrated in water, reflected by mirrors; it may impregnate many objects; it is not interrupted by opaque bodies, and penetrates towards whom it is directed. This last circumstance determines that sympathy or antipathy, which we often feel at first sight for a person according to the similarity or dissimilarity of our fluid with his." He also told his listeners there are three important qualifications the good magnetizer must possess: "First—belief; second—will or volition; third—benevolence". As for "good health", that is not absolutely indispensable, but it is most helpful. For in good health "the fluid is then abundant, well animalized, and not impregnated with deleterious quality".

Women, he went on, are excellent magnetizers, for what they may lack in energy or will, "they make up in benevolence, charity, and love, the best of their attributes". In the course of these lectures he also gave some simple instructions in the art of magnetization. He noted particularly that the tub could be used effectively even as Mesmer, himself, had used it. An ordinary chain could be used also. But a magnetized tree gives superior results, and "it is under

trees that the most astonishing effects have been produced by De Puységur . . ." (7).¹

Mesmerism also became known in the United States through the writings of another Frenchman, J. P. F. Deleuze, whose book, *Instruction pratique sur le Magnétisme Animal* was published in Paris in 1825. In 1828 Deleuze was appointed librarian of the Museum of Natural History in Paris. In 1837 a translation of his work on magnetism by Thomas C. Hartshorn of Providence, Rhode Island, was published. Deleuze suggested in this book, now available in English (10), that in the magnetization process "a substance emanates from him who magnetizes, and is conveyed to the person magnetized, in the direction given by his will". He went on to say that this substance, or fluid, emanating from the body, is directed by the will, but can nevertheless be controlled by the eyes and the hands.

In his appendix to the Deleuze translation, Hartshorn gives some of the facts about some cases of mesmerism practised in Providence at that time. One case concerned a child, Anne, about nine years old, who was attending the school of a Miss Snow in Providence. During recess, when the child was found asleep, Miss Snow and others tried unsuccessfully to rouse her. They became alarmed and called in a young medical student, son of Commodore John Orde Creighton, who saw at once that the sleeping child was in a magnetized state. Another child, Jane Bell, ten years old, then burst into tears and confessed that she had put Anne to sleep. On investigation, it turned out that Anne had been put to sleep on a previous occasion.

Hartshorn also tells of a nervous woman who had been put to sleep by her husband, but did not know he was doing this to her. It required about fifteen minutes to complete the process, the woman in one part of the room and the husband in another. When asleep, the woman got up, went into the next room, took down a book, and read it. After a short period, she was awakened and told precisely what she had done. Speaking of the husband, Hartshorn writes, "The gentleman is a resident of this city, a friend of mine, on whose veracity I can depend" (10, Appendix, p. 10).

A physician, a Dr. Brownell, related the following to Hartshorn.

¹ The Marquis de Puységur was one of the pioneer mesmerists of the late eighteenth century and author of *Du Magnétisme Animal*, Paris, 1807. He was also the founder in 1785 of the Society of Harmony at Strasbourg, which achieved considerable fame as a training school in mesmerism (see 8, pp. 10 ff.; and cf. 9, pp. 59 ff.).

He, Brownell, had a patient who lived more than a quarter of a mile from his house, and for that reason Brownell requested the services of a somnambulist, who was then in his home. He pointed out to the somnambulist, a woman, that the patient lived a considerable distance from where they, the doctor and somnambulist, were sitting, and that the patient's home could not be seen from there. But the somnambulist said she could see the patient. When asked in what room the patient was resting, she replied that it was the third room back from the street. She was then asked to describe the location of the furniture in the room so that her clairvoyance could be tested, and she thereupon described the furniture with the greatest accuracy. Dr. Brownell then told the somnambulist that the patient had been ill a long time and that he wished her to examine him. She, the somnambulist, replied, "He looks so bad, I do not like to do it". The doctor then asked her to look at the man's stomach, and she replied that it looked all right to her, as did his kidneys and liver. She also said that a complete examination of the intestinal canal revealed no abnormality. After Dr. Brownell insisted she look over every part of his body, she said, "His spleen is swelled; it is enlarged". When Brownell asked how she knew, she replied, "It is a great deal larger than yours". And when he asked if she saw his spleen, she said yes, and that the patient's spleen—a mile and a quarter away, it must be recalled—"is a great deal larger and thicker than your hand". When the doctor asked her to put her hand where his spleen is, she did it with perfect accuracy. When he asked her about the other viscera, she again described them accurately. She also remarked, in reply to the doctor's query, that she had never before talked about physiology or anatomy and had never seen pictures of the abdominal organs.

Seven days later the patient became seriously ill, and died three days after that, on a Saturday. At the post-mortem examination the following Monday, attended by eighteen persons, including sixteen physicians, Dr. Brownell presented all the details he had received from the somnambulist and then asked the physicians present if they could diagnose disease of the spleen from external examination only. They replied that was not possible. The doctor then opened the abdomen, and, to the amazement of all present, found a spleen so enlarged it weighed fifty-seven ounces rather than a normal four to six ounces. No other disease was found (11, pp. 369-370).

A long letter on clairvoyance was also written by Colonel W. L. Stone to the New York *Commercial Advertiser* of 4 September 1837.

Stone, formerly a non-believer in animal magnetism, now writes, "We shall laugh at it no more" (11, pp. 370-371). For, he continues, he was in Providence, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, 26, 27, 28 August (apparently in 1837), and witnessed there an experiment with a blind young lady, Miss B., who had been magnetized. On Sunday a small package was received from Mr. Stephen Covill of Troy, New York, containing a note he, Colonel Stone, wanted the blind lady to read while under magnetic influence and without breaking the seal. The blind lady thereupon read everything in the letter with the seal unbroken, and in the presence of several professional people of the community.

Colonel Stone was ridiculed by many people who knew him because of this fantastic and unbelievable story. But the Rev. E. B. Hall of Providence wrote C. F. Durant as follows: "Dear Sir,— . . . The reality of that which is called Animal Magnetism is purely a question of fact. . . . In the particular case with which my name has been connected, I had Miss B. wholly under my own control. I questioned her about places and objects which she had never seen, and some of which, as they then existed, no creature but myself could have known. I proposed the questions in the most guarded manner. . . . She described distant objects, whose position in some cases I had just changed, whose existence in other cases I did not then know or believe, so truly, so wonderfully, that I could only marvel. At other times, she has done the same in regard to my own house, and houses in other towns and states. . . . [I] am convinced that she sees either by some other organ than the eye, or with such rays of light only as can penetrate all substances. . . . I have seen a sealed letter, containing a passage enclosed in *lead*, which letter she held at the side of her head not more than a moment, all in sight, then gave it back to the writer, and afterwards wrote what she had read in it—the letter was opened in my presence, and the two writings agreed in every word, there being two differences in spelling only. Of her power, or that of any somnambulist, to examine bodies and describe diseases in others, I have *seen* no satisfactory proof. But one of our first physicians, who has published nothing on the subject, has recently told me of a case of his own, which is enough to silence, if not convince most skeptics. . . . With great regard, E. B. Hall" (11, pp. 375-382).

The C. F. Durant to whom E. B. Hall addressed the above letter was the author of an early work on animal magnetism, published in New York in 1837 under the title *Exposition, or a new theory of animal magnetism, with a key to the mysteries; demonstrated by experiments*

with the most celebrated somnambulists in America. In Chapter 4 of this volume, apparently overlooking or ignorant of Du Commun's work, he writes: "The first public lectures of importance on animal magnetism delivered in the United States, were at Pawtucket, Rhode Island, in the fall and winter of 1836, by Professor Charles Poyen de St. Sauveur, a French gentleman of eminent talents, and highly esteemed. . . . His principal magnetic somnambulist . . . is Miss Gleason of Pawtucket, a young lady of very respectable family . . . and highly cultivated mind. . . . They visited Boston and Lowell, where Mr. Poyen gave a series of practical lectures and gained many converts to the doctrine. They are, at the time of writing this chapter, in Nantucket. . . . Mr. Poyen may justly be considered the father of the science in this country." He was, continued Durant, a follower of Deleuze. He and the other followers of Deleuze in America "have no hypothesis or theory, and in exhibiting the phenomena of science, they offer it as a wonderful property in the physiological constitution of man . . . exhibiting it in a brighter light than any other the moral power and divine origin of man, giving a new life to the religious principle, and furnishing unconquerable weapons to Christianity against materialism. . . . [It] opens a new broad field to psychological speculation . . . creates a new method of pathological investigation—settles therapeutics on a basis hitherto unknown to the medical world—enlarges and raises so much the domain of physiology, that we may qualify the modifications operated on it as true revolutions" (12, pp. 45 ff.). Durant goes on to say that there are six professors of animal magnetism who studied under Poyen who have become as proficient and effective as Poyen himself—or even better. He cites President Francis Wayland (1796-1865) of Brown University as a believer in magnetism, along with Thomas Hartshorn, calling attention at the same time to Hartshorn's translation of Deleuze's work. As to Poyen, Durant does grant in a footnote in Chapter 4 that some people have called him "an ignorant old Frenchman" and a man with "more conceit than brains".

Providence and Pawtucket were apparently hospitable centers for experimenters in animal magnetism during the early nineteenth century. Thomas H. Webb, the editor of the leading newspaper, the *Providence Journal*, was keenly interested in the subject, and Durant speaks of Webb's article on the work of the Rev. Thomas H. Greene of Pawtucket, a well-known magnetizer. Durant speaks at greater length of the work of Mr. and Mrs. William Andros of Providence. Mr. Andros, who was born in Plainfield, Connecticut, in

1806, had lived in Providence for some years and owned a varnish manufacturing business. Before going into business he had taught school and was a citizen of respected status. He had attended the first Poyen lecture on magnetism in Pawtucket, and even if impressed, had not become a believer. But after the second Poyen lecture he became an enthusiastic and confirmed convert to the cause of animal magnetism.

Another man who came away from the Poyen lectures a confirmed convert was Americus Potter, a Providence jeweler, who remembered particularly Poyen's dictum at the lectures that every man had magnetic powers within himself. Andros, who had become acquainted with Potter, asked him to magnetize Mrs. Potter, and he did so successfully. Thereupon Andros, himself, said he could magnetize his wife also, and on the second attempt he succeeded, keeping her asleep for a half-hour.

Andros's enthusiasm for the new science was now unbounded. He neglected his business more and more, and devoted himself increasingly to magnetizing experiments. Soon the fame of the couple engaged in these experiments spread, and people came from distant places to watch them. Mrs. Andros, daughter of the owner of a big cotton mill in Dighton, Massachusetts, performed many "magnetic" tasks for businessmen who knew her and her family and who sent her "in spirit" to their homes and offices. She is said to have described accurately those homes and offices and even people waiting in them. Durant called her husband one of the best somnambulists in America, and described as follows one experiment in which Mr. and Mrs. Andros were the chief figures. One Saturday, the 19th of August (apparently in 1837), they paid a visit to a home in Jersey City, New Jersey, where others had come by invitation to witness an experiment in animal magnetism. Those present included Dr. Palmer of the *Boston Commercial Gazette*; Mr. Balch of New York City; Henry Erving of Boston; and Mr. Hale, the only person present who knew what was going to be attempted in the experiment that day. The others were non-believers in animal magnetism, but were willing to be convinced if substantial proof were offered.

One experiment was concerned with sending Mrs. Andros "in spirit" to distant places and describing what she saw. Mrs. Andros then closed her eyes, and simultaneously everybody present except Mr. Balch was put into "magnetic" communication with her. When one of the men present asked her about a room in a town many miles distant, she replied, "There is a carpet on the floor, something dark in the center of the room . . . table . . . chair . . .

two lamps". When Mr. Erving sent Mrs. Andros to Calcutta, she gave accurate descriptions. Other correct answers astounded the onlookers. The correct answers require no explanation, says Durant, but there were also some incorrect answers, and he, Durant, says the reason is, "according to my theory, she receives her information from the brain of the one in magnetic communication. You had an idea she could not tell, and therefore when you asked a question, you conceived on your brain some *incorrect* object, which was transmitted by the magnetic cords to the nerves, to her brain, and answered incorrectly of course" (12, p. 92).

Durant's theorizing on the nature of animal magnetism makes curious reading today. "The magnetic fluid", he wrote, "pervades all substances, and is generally inactive or nearly so, until put into motion by the friction of some of the globules striking against it. It has a great affinity for animal hair, and a still greater one for metal; here, a deer's tail whirled in the atmosphere, collects the fluid and the tail, striking a metallic plate, communicates the fluid to the plate; from thence it may be conducted by a string to a stop cock, from which hydrogen gas may issue and take fire by the fluid; such a lamp is used for instructive lectures at most colleges in the country. The fluid is collected by the same principle in the electric machine. The magnetic fluid pervades all substances, animate as well as inanimate, and produces singular effects in animals. A small portion if conducted from an electric machine into a man, will produce drowsiness; a very large portion of it will produce death, by forcing asunder the globules of which man is composed. . . . A small portion of the fluid is necessary to support life." Later Durant says, "The magnetiser can force the fluid through all objects (except cerin) and consequently can force the fluid 'by his will', in a curve through the brain of a third person in its passage to the brain of the magnetic somnambulist who will be able to answer correctly all questions which the person in a magnetic communication could answer himself". Cerin he describes as an animal fat, "the globules of which are so soft, that they mash together and close up all the pores when spread on paper and held between two magnets, cuts off the magnetic stream and renders the magnets as powerless as wood".

Durant dedicated his book on animal magnetism to Professor Francis Wayland, hailing him as the great defender in America of the new science. "You have braved one front of battle," he writes in the lengthy dedication, "and you alone deserve the dedication. It is, Sir, the great influence of your name in the promulgation of the

science, in the making of proselytes, and the silencing of hardened believers, as well as a sincere admiration of your brilliant talents and sound judgment, which have induced me to offer this small token of respect. . . ." And then in the first chapter he writes: "The origin of animal magnetism is coeval with the creation of Eve. The extremely subtle and invisible fluid, which when in contact with the animal brain, is capable of performing all the phenomena of this wonderful science, had existed millions of years anterior to the creation of man, and is probably coeval with the birth of the trilobite, or even with creation itself. The sun's rays must pass through a suitable medium—so this invisible fluid continued unknown, though not inactive, until some of its inherent properties were developed in passing through a suitable medium which was found to be the complicated and delicate brain of the highest order in the organized forms of creation" (12, p. 14). He then went on to say that witchcraft, water dowsing with a stick, the sorcery of India, that charm of the rat-catcher, are all "modified branches of this heretofore intricate science". As for the gypsies, they are the supreme masters of animal magnetism, and they succeed in fortune-telling because they receive "the aid of the magnetic fluid [and] far surpass the best magnetic somnambulists in the country".

One of the extraordinary cases cited by Durant involved Miss Jane C. Rider, apparently of Providence, known as both a clairvoyant and somnambulist. Her physician was Professor L. W. Belden, who is quoted in the Durant book. Belden states that "On November 10th, it was proposed to ascertain whether she [Jane C. Rider] could read with her eyes closed. She was seated in a corner of the room, the lights were placed at a distance from her, and so screened as to leave her in almost entire darkness. . . . She read with great ease a great number of cards, some of which were written with a pencil, and so obscurely, that in a faint light no trace could be discovered by common eyes. . . . She told the date of coins, even when the figures were nearly obliterated. A visitor handed her a letter, with the request that she would read the motto on the seal, which she readily did, although several persons present had been unable to decipher it without the aid of a lamp. The whole of this time, the eyes were, to all appearance, perfectly closed. . . . She fell asleep while I was prescribing for her. . . . She was visited during that and the following day by probably more than a hundred people. To this circumstance, undoubtedly, is to be attributed the unprecedented length of the paroxysm, for she did not wake till Friday morning, forty-eight hours after the attack. . . . For greater security

a second handkerchief was sometimes placed below the one which she constantly wore over her eyes, but apparently without causing any obstruction to the vision. She also repeated, with great propriety and distinctness, several pieces of poetry, some of which she had learned in childhood but had forgotten, and others which she had merely read several years since, without ever having committed them to memory. . . . A colored girl came in and seated herself beside her: she was asked if she knew that lady; she smiled and returned no answer. Someone said 'She has a beautiful complexion, has she not?' Jane laughed heartily, and said, 'I should think she was somewhat tanned'."

Durant made this observation on the experiment: "The high responsibility of Miss Rider and the undoubted science of Dr. Belden precludes the possibility of doubt". Durant also observed that in the past the only error had been to attribute these and similar phenomena in other cases to the supernatural rather than to some branch of animal magnetism, "which can be clearly demonstrated by the well known and analogous laws which govern the universe" (12, p. 24; 13, pp. 40 ff.; and 14, i, p. 524).

Miss Loraina Brackett of Rhode Island was a somnambule of considerable fame in the America of 1837. One volume which related her exploits was the work of an author who called himself simply "A Physician", and was published in Philadelphia in 1841 under the title, *The Animal Magnetiser, or history, phenomena, and curative effects of animal magnetism with instructions for conducting the magnetic operation*. The author speaks of "the astonishing powers of Miss Brackett . . . who, when in her magnetic somnambulism, could tell many of the contents of a box closely packed with dried plants, a bird's nest, and various other articles, altogether unknown to her previously; and who read notes from Colonel W. L. Stone under many envelopes and *numerous* seals, sending them back with the contents copied on the outside, and the seals still unbroken" (15).

This "Physician" obviously regarded Miss Brackett with awe. "There have been many well-authenticated instances of magnetic somnambulists who could read a book through a cover," he wrote. "But there are many still more astonishing facts that seem almost as if the soul of the sleeper could leave the body, and travel to any distance at the will of the magnetiser! From among these cases that of Miss Brackett may be chosen, as one of the most astonishing and well-authenticated. This young lady was totally blind, and deprived of her voice, except a mere whisper, in consequence of a blow on the head from an iron weight some years before, which for a long time

deprived her of reason, and left her still subject to excruciating nervous pains. She was placed under magnetic treatment by Dr. Capron of Providence, Rhode Island, in May, and it was continued almost daily till September 1837, when she came under the notice of her historian, Colonel Stone of New York [cf. 16]. Her natural sight was then so far restored that she could distinguish the sex of any person by the dress." Continuing, and calling her "this wonderful somnambule", the author writes that in magnetic sleep and in her imagination she could "accompany any individual with whom her magnetiser placed her in communication to scenes that she had never beheld, hundreds of miles from the bounds of her furthest travels. She would then describe correctly what she saw in places where she had never been, and even seemed to suffer, while on her imaginative journey, some of the evils which would have attended it had she been there in reality."

If told to go into a box, Miss Brackett complained of suffocation. If taken to sea, she complained of sea sickness. When taken to Washington, she described the Capitol and the sights. It must be noted here that although she was blind, cotton padding was placed over her eyes during the course of the experiments. Thus blindfolded, she went to New York City in her imagination, and she described accurately scenes on the way, some sights on Broadway, the carved work on Mechanic's Hall in the city. He gives other examples of Miss Brackett's remarkable powers, concluding, "But enough has now been said to illustrate this most wonderful species of lucidity. . . . Those somnambules who possess a high degree of lucidity while laboring under convulsive and other diseases, are capable of predicting their paroxysms, and the time of recovery, almost to the minute. . . . And the most remarkable power of the magnetiser is that by which he can will the patient to believe himself engaged in eating or drinking any substance that suits his fancy, and all the effects of active medicines have been known to be produced by their imaginary mode of swallowing physic! . . . Dr. Capron, the magnetiser of Miss Brackett, called for a tumbler of water, and after drinking a portion of it himself, requested his somnambule to drink some likewise, which she did. In a secret request in writing from a bystander, he willed the remaining water to be castor oil, and requested Miss Brackett to take some more without hinting the change. She lifted the glass to her lips, and turned from it with disgust. On being pressed to take it, she succeeded in swallowing a little, with the usual grimace that follows the drinking of that delightful beverage. At a similar suggestion the remaining

water was willed to appear as snuff. On being then desired to drink, she smiled ironically, and said, 'Drink this! Drink this! You know I cannot.' Mr. Kent then requested Dr. Capron to will it to be pleasant lemonade, and repeat the request. She then drank the whole of the remaining water, and on being asked how she liked it, she replied, 'Why it's very good, but a little too sour.' The empty tumbler was then willed to contain ice cream, and she was again pressed to drink. . . . She replied that she could not drink it and that she required a spoon to eat it, which she did after a spoon was given her. She remarked that it was highly flavored and so cold that it made her teeth ache. After this the tumbler was willed to be a black kitten, whereupon Miss Brackett fingered it and said, 'Here, take this dirty black thing!' "

An observer who was involved in these experiments is quoted in the volume as follows: "I am certain as I am of being able to see or to hear something directly before me, that no direction, either by a whisper, pause or gesture, was given by the magnetiser to the magnetised; and I know that the direction I gave to Dr. Capron could not have been anticipated by him or anyone else" (15, pp. 64 ff.).

MESMERISM IN THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

The publication in 1843 of Samuel Gregory's volume, *Animal Magnetism*, indicated more emphatically than any other book had up to that time that animal magnetism could well have very wide popular appeal and that the masses of the people could utilize it in their workaday activities. Significantly perhaps, this volume by Gregory bore this complete title: *Animal Magnetism and Its Uses, With Particular Direction For Employing It in Removing Pains and Curing Diseases, In Producing Insensibility To Pain In Surgical and Dental Operations; and In The Examination of Internal Diseases* (17). In his book he traces the history of mesmerism in the United States, dating its beginnings from 1836 and noting that it has been used to some extent by physicians in the treatment of disease and that it is becoming increasingly popular. He says that there are "hundreds of physicians in all parts of the country engaged in investigating its claims, and proving its utility in practice". Some of the physicians he names include Drs. C. Caldwell and J. R. Buchanan of Louisville, Kentucky; S. W. Mitchell of Philadelphia and H. H. Sherwood of New York, both of whom have published books on the subject; Capron, Brownell and Utley of Providence; and W. Lewis, A. Flint, F. Dana

W. Ingalls, D. Gilbert, Gregerson, Ball, Stedman, and Stone of Boston.

"Now, there is proof abundant, positive, and satisfactory, that a good clairvoyant mesmerisee, can sit down by a patient and accurately and minutely point out the seat, the nature, and the extent of any internal disease, and the precise state of the internal organs," he wrote. "By sympathy he usually feels the pains experienced by the patient at the time. The mesmerisee can be put in communication with the patient or not, as thought best; for he can examine at a distance even of miles."

Samuel Gregory and his brother, G. Gregory, gave several lectures in Boston and illustrated the efficacy of mesmerism in the diagnosis and treatment of disease. They employed "two excellent mesmerisees, who examined numerous cases with entire success and satisfaction". Samuel Gregory then cites the case of Mr. B. F. Ferguson of Maine, "who was examined by one of our subjects. He had no particular complaint except a lame knee; the joint was affected, the cartilage injured. Without any possible means of finding it out, by his mesmeric vision and sympathy of sensation, the subject discovered the lameness, placed his finger precisely on the tenderest spot, and described the diseased joint, as Dr. Warren [apparently a reputable physician] described it a day or two previous."

He then goes on and tells of a Dr. Swan of Medford, Massachusetts, who had talked with him, Gregory, about an elderly person in Medford who had met with a fall which caused pain in the hip. "It being difficult to decide whether the thigh bone was fractured," says Gregory, "a sleepwalker was consulted, and declared that there was a slight fracture near the hip joint. Dr. Warren afterwards examined the case, and his skill confirmed the sleepwalker's statement" (17, pp. 10 ff.).

The testimony of Gregory and others who made such great claims for mesmerism is often quoted verbatim in these pages, for they communicate something of the spirit of records which these practitioners kept at the time. Also, it cannot be emphasized too often that the sleepwalkers, somnambules and others with these great alleged powers did their diagnosing without physical contact of any description with the patient and often at great distances from those patients.

For example, Gregory writes, "The testimony of mesmerisees has been proved correct by post-mortem examinations. Dr. Brownell, of Providence, had a sleepwalker examine one of his

patients at a distance who, as he supposed, had a disease of the liver and stomach. The subject said nothing ailed these organs, but the spleen was found so enlarged as to weigh fifty-seven ounces, instead of four or six, as usual." According to Gregory, this successful diagnosis proved that the subject does not obtain his information from the mesmerizer. He then goes on and speaks of Miss Cynthia Gleason, "an excellent mesmerizer", who has over a period of some years examined more than a thousand patients in Nashua, Lowell, Boston, and other cities. He also speaks of the "remarkably clairvoyant" lady who worked with his brother and who devoted herself almost exclusively to examining the sick. "She has this year made numerous examinations in various towns in the State, some in the presence of the patient, some many miles distant; mostly in private, but some before parties and private audiences in connection with our lectures. In these cases every precaution has been taken to prevent the mesmerizer and the subject from obtaining any previous knowledge of the disease, but not in a single instance has the examiner failed accurately to point out the symptoms and describe the disease itself, so far as it could be known whether the description was correct or not. I will give a few instances" (17, pp. 13 ff.).

"At Grafton . . . in April last, C. B. Jencks, Esq., was put in communication with the subject, while mesmerized at a public lecture, and conducted her mentally to a sick person in the neighborhood. Directly she said that the patient was a lady, that her lungs were diseased, that she had recently had a turn of raising blood . . . all of which was true, as the gentleman told the audience. On another evening in the same village, a person was examined before the audience, with equal success." "While at Lancaster, South Village, in the middle of May, Dr. Simmons being present, was put in communication with the clairvoyant, and directed her to a patient at a distance, without giving any hint in what direction, or whether it was man or woman. The mesmerisee immediately pointed in the direction of the patient, and said it was an old lady. The doctor replied there was an old lady sick in the house, but that was not the person he had in mind. There is also a young woman there who is out of health, she continued. She has some trouble in the lungs, a violent pain in the left side, something presses there. The doctor then requested her to look further; and she said there is a tumor on the right side—a large one—it presses on the internal organs and causes the pain in the left side. She then described the tumor more particularly and mentioned some precautions in case of a surgical

operation. Dr. Simmons then remarked to the audience, 'The patient is Miss M. F. of West Boylston—she has a bad tumor, as mentioned, and we expect some trouble with it, but hope to remove it without an operation. I could not have described the case better than the mesmerisee has done it.'

At West Boylston, soon after that, there were three examinations in public. One case was diagnosed as a disease of the liver and stomach, with disagreeable symptoms which included pain in the head. The patient stated the description was accurate. Another case pertained to a disease of the lungs, with part of one lung gone. This diagnosis also proved correct. The mesmerisee then was told of a sick lady a mile away, after which she said that patient was suffering an advanced case of consumption. This, too, proved completely correct.

Gregory reprints several testimonials from "those who have been thoroughly examined" and are fully satisfied with the diagnosis of their ailments. One of these testimonials reads as follows: "Grafton. . . . May 20, 1843. . . . Having this day been examined by a clairvoyant, under the direction of her mesmerizer, Mr. G. Gregory, I cheerfully testify that the examination has been in the highest degree successful and satisfactory. I am troubled with a stricture in the chest, particularly in the upper part of the left lung, and through to the shoulder blade and spine, sometimes causing intense suffering in that part—a pain in the head, the top of it being occasionally so tender and sore that I cannot endure the weight of a comb or cap—am sometimes taken with a buzzing in the right side of the head, instantly followed by dizziness, depriving me of the power to stand without support. These and other sensations the mesmerisee described with perfect accuracy, placing her finger on the very places where the pains are located. I could not have given a more definite description of my pains and symptoms of my disease.—Hannah P. Batchelder." There followed this addendum signed by her husband, Joseph Batchelder: "I write in the above statement respecting the examination of my wife, and will add, that the description of the disease and the diseased organs seemed strictly correct, and such as naturally to account for the symptoms mentioned. The remedies prescribed means indicated for restoring the health appear remarkably appropriate and judicious" (17, p. 15).

Another testimonial, dated Natick, Massachusetts, 12 July 1843, reads, "I hereby certify that my mother in the town of Alexandria, New Hampshire, 125 miles distant, was this day examined by Miss

S. W. H., mesmerized by Mr. G. Gregory in this village, and that the examination was perfectly correct and satisfactory. The first thing said of the patient was, that she had a tumor on the right side of the abdomen; and among other particulars, that she had cramp pains in the stomach, and the right foot was red and swollen—all of which are strictly correct. The patient has a tumor, as stated—is sometimes taken with violent and distressing turns of cramp in the stomach, and the right foot after fatigue and walking, is sometimes swollen and purple. I was perfectly astonished to hear the mesmerisee minutely describe things known to no one in town, and probably to no one in this State, except myself. I am satisfied also that she did not get the information from my mind, as facts were stated which I was not aware of, but which, from the symptoms, I have no doubt are as stated to be. I consider the examination a decisive test of clairvoyance and its utility in examination of the sick.—H. A. Davis ” (17, p. 15).

Gregory reprints the following announcement under the heading *Phreno-Mesmeric Examinations*; “ This mesmerisee employs clairvoyance not only in pathology, but also in phrenology. Without touching, without any aid from the eye, but simply by the spiritual vision, she can examine the head externally and *internally*; can tell not only the size but the *activity* of the organs; and thus can tell the disposition and talents, and how to improve and direct them, and describe the character with astonishing accuracy, altogether beyond what is possible by external manipulations of the head. This she proved repeatedly in private and in public. Persons who desire phrenological examinations can be attended to.”

Gregory then goes on to tell of many other cures in Boston, including cure of “ temporary insanity ” and of spinal disease. A woman of Milford, Massachusetts, suffered from a form of spinal disease that confined her to her bed. Her physicians regarded her ailment as incurable. But mesmerism, says S. Gregory, cured her completely in six weeks in 1842 and made it possible for her to walk several miles with ease. Gregory suggests that “ a good way to acquire the art is for persons to meet together a few evenings—those who wish to mesmerize and those who wish to be mesmerized—and practice, under the direction of a mesmerizer ”. As evidence of his own great skill as a teacher of mesmerism, he reproduces in his volume a “ certificate ” signed by twenty-one residents of Grafton on 12 June 1843, in which they testify to Mr. Gregory’s effectiveness after attending his classes in mesmeric instruction for six evenings. “ We recommend Mr. Gregory ”, they testify, “ as a gentleman of

exemplary character, and well qualified to give instruction upon this interesting and important subject."

In another part of his volume, where he discusses sleepwalking and clairvoyance, Gregory speaks in his best scientific manner of the various types of mesmerism. "There are different degrees of the mesmeric sleep as of the natural," he begins. "A person thoroughly mesmerized has no communication with external objects by the ordinary modes of sensation. Though the action of the senses is entirely suspended, yet the vital organs are active, and there is developed an internal sensibility as remarkable for its activity as the external for its deadness, as if sensation had receded from the surface to the brain only to increase the intensity of its action. The subject's nervous fluid being displaced by that of the mesmerizer, his own person is totally insensible to pain, although he is alive to the slightest injuries inflicted on the mesmerizer. . . . The eyes are closed, or, if open, 'their sense is shut', but the spirit is so far detached from the body that it perceives objects *directly* without looking through the eye, and having its vision limited by that organ. The spirit is partially unfettered and acts with a little of the freedom and scope that it will have after death. So that this is no miracle, but only a development of powers that we already possess. This power is called clairvoyance, or clear sightedness, meaning the mental, or mesmeric, vision" (17, pp. 15-16).

Magazines throughout America discussed mesmerism and magnetism with increasing frequency as the mid-nineteenth century approached. Mesmerism was no longer so new or so outlandish. It could now boast some tradition and some champions with famous names, representing many fields, but particularly medicine and religion. It was inevitable that lay publications would discuss it continually, and it was to be expected that professional or quasi-professional publications devoted more or less exclusively to mesmerism would be established. The best known of this latter group was *The Magnet*, founded as a monthly periodical in New York in 1843. The editor was the Reverend La Roy Sunderland (1804-1885), and in the first issue he announced that the magazine would be "devoted to the investigation of human physiology, embracing vitality, pathetism, psychology, phrenopathy, phrenology, physiognomy, and magnetism". Sunderland, known primarily as an abolitionist, had "scientific" inclinations also and regarded phrenology and magnetism as the great sciences of the future. He was one of the most controversial figures of the day—some would call him more notorious than controversial—and it will be helpful to review his life

here, for he represents a type that, with some variations, we find rather common in the history of magnetism in America.

He was born in 1804 in Exeter, Rhode Island, attended the public schools there and was also a student for a period at Day's Academy in Wrentham, Massachusetts. In 1826 he was admitted, as the *Dictionary of American Biography* puts it, "into full connection of the Methodist Episcopal Church". Physically small, he was a most intense preacher for whom a great career as a revivalist was predicted. But this fresh force in the American Protestant ministry, of whom so much was expected, had more and more doubts about the Divinity and drew away from religion, so much so that he found it necessary to withdraw completely from the active ministry in 1833, although he remained a nominal lay Methodist. But he took the intensity of his abandoned ministry into his abolitionist work, and with a vigor that drew the opposition of powerful factions within the church, particularly when he founded and edited *Zion's Watchman*, Methodism's powerful anti-slavery voice.

The opposition to Sunderland gathered momentum. Bishops and distinguished Methodist laymen brought many charges against him, including slander, immorality, libel. He seems to have cleared himself of all guilt, but the violent opposition had its effect, and in 1842 he left the Methodist Episcopal Church and helped found the Wesleyan Connection of America, a dissident group which was still Methodist in orientation, but without an episcopacy and strongly abolitionist. And yet, although he helped found the new Church, Sunderland did not actually join it, perhaps because his growing skepticism now made him all but an unbeliever and, perhaps even more important, because of his growing conviction that he possessed great hypnotic powers and also because of his enthusiasm for such new non-religious faiths as Mesmerism, Grahamism and faith-healing. He was finally to become one of America's famous infidels and founder of a new faith which claimed no divine guidance, Pathetism. He was married, had several children and grandchildren, was separated from his wife, and died in 1885, apparently a cheerful unbeliever to the end. His books and other extensive writings include *Pathetism: An Essay Toward A Correct Theory of Mind* (1847); *Book of Psychology* (1853); *Book of Human Nature* (1853); and *Ideology* (1885).

Many newspapers of high repute greeted Sunderland's *The Magnet* with cautious respect, and they included the *Boston Daily Evening Transcript*, *Albany Atlas*, *New-England Weekly Review*, and the *Broome Republican*.

The first issue of *The Magnet*, May 1843, carried these statements

of principles on page one: "The subject of Living Magnetism, we know, is destined to abuse and misrepresentation. . . . Phrenology, though now in its infancy, has well nigh lived down the ridicule and opposition which were formerly waged against it. . . . But what a glorious triumph has phrenology achieved over the world, in arms against it! Yes, its claims as a science of the first importance, are not only now generally admitted, but the best minds in the civilized world are convinced of its truth."

A letter in *The Magnet* of June 1844, from one "R. C.", apparently a gentleman, Mr. R. Carter, of Boston, gives some examples of clairvoyant and magnetic phenomena that he had witnessed. But before reprinting the letter, the editors (Peter P. Good, described in the same issue as "for many years Principal of the Pestalozzian Institute, New York", was seemingly a new editor who joined Sunderland) inserted this note: ". . . We have had scores of descriptions from persons in the somnipathic state, like the following [by R. C.], yet we have never considered them as satisfactory demonstrations of what we understand as clairvoyance; for it will be seen at once that there is not sufficient evidence here to prove that this boy actually saw the things which it is supposed he meant to describe. . . . These accounts, in order to satisfy others, should be made of things under the following circumstances. . . . The patient should repeatedly describe accurately, what no other person present knows, or what all the persons present know; that neither the patient nor operator had any previous knowledge of, and the things described should be examined immediately afterwards, by all who heard the description, that they may see and judge of its accuracy. . . . True, we have had such descriptions, but they have been given under circumstances which have taught us to be careful how we presume upon this power, or report accounts of its exercise, which will not bear the most rigid investigation."

There follows R.C.'s, or Carter's, letter. He says he knows the editor does not have "overmuch faith" in clairvoyance. However, he continues, "I do not pretend, at present, to draw any conclusions from what I have witnessed, but merely relate the facts as they occurred or appeared to me to occur, without comment or explanation."

He then goes on to speak of "the first remarkable specimens of the magnetic phenomena that I ever saw". He describes a mesmeric session which took place on 22 March 1842 in the Boston home of the editor of one of the city's newspapers. A Frenchman who taught his native language at Harvard College was the mesmerizer, and the

boy to be magnetized was about fourteen years old, "timid, quiet, and rather unintelligent", and the two had only known each other two or three days.

When the session began, the mesmerizer, or operator, seated himself opposite the boy, gazed at him intently, made a few passes at his head and arms, and in twenty minutes the boy's eyelids "closed firmly and suddenly, as if they had been struck down". After making more passes at the boy's head, the operator stopped and talked with some ladies who were in the same room. Returning to the boy, he tied a handkerchief over the lad's eyes so that he could not possibly see anything. Upon being asked to describe several articles which he could not see, the boy did so with great accuracy. But Carter, not fully satisfied, asked the operator to take the boy to distant places, and then he whispered to the French magnetizer that it should first be Washington. When the boy, in answer to the operator's question, agreed to go to a distant city, the operator began by saying, "Come, then, we will go—now we are on the road. Ah! here we are; is not this a fine city?" "Yes, very fine." "What is the name of it?" "New York."

The operator stopped at this point, remarking he thought he was in the Washington area and that he had not really thought of New York. He then remarked they should not stop at that point, but should rather continue, which they did for a while, after which the operator said, "Here is another large city—how do you like it?" The boy described the city accurately as Philadelphia, and further on, when they came to a very broad street, he correctly observed they were in Washington. He continued accurately describing buildings, statues, and other sites in Washington. He was then returned to Boston and, still blindfolded, was taken north to Quebec, describing as he went children, squirrels, a fort, cannon, the color of soldiers' coats, a city and country he was unable to name, but a city in which, he said, there lived "English, with plenty of French, Scotch, and Irish". After the Quebec journey he was returned to Boston again, placed on a ship, and taken to Le Havre, France. He said he liked Le Havre, and when he was taken to Brest remarked that he liked it even better than Le Havre. He described a Brest home accurately, identified objects in a room in a house where lived the mother of the French operator mesmerizer in Boston. He, the Frenchman, also asked the boy if the lady of the house had children, and the blindfolded boy replied, "Yes, two sons and three daughters". He even remarked accurately that one of the daughters was out fetching wood and that one of the sons was on a ship on

the English coast and that the ship was named *The Empire*. "Where is the other son of this lady?" asked the Frenchman in Boston. And the blindfolded boy replied, "He is at No. 5, S——P Place, Boston." Taken to Normandy and other places in France, the boy continued to describe articles and landmarks with great accuracy.

When he was returned to Boston after the French trip, he was asked to examine some people in that city. He then took the hand of a friend of Carter's apparently in the same room, told the man that he was consumptive and that his brother had died of consumption.

Carter concludes this account in *The Magnet* with these words: "This, dear sir, is an exact transcript of the clairvoyant remarks of the boy, and of the questions put to him. Deception and collusion were out of the question. . . . All present were believers in human magnetism, and mostly relations of the gentleman who was chiefly concerned in the experiments, so that no advantage could have accrued from seeing them.—The boy could not, in most cases, have derived his knowledge from the mind of the mesmerizer, or of any one present, for he told things which none of us previously knew. . . . Should you care to hear more from me on this subject, I will send you an account of some still more remarkable examples of the same kind" (18, pp. 97 ff.).

One of the champions of pathetism, a form of magnetism, in the 1840s, was W. B. Fahnestock, M.D., of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He believed that the sense of hearing, smell, and seeing lay dormant deep within the consciousness of a person, that this sense had to be aroused, and that when adequately aroused distance and other ordinary obstacles were no longer obstacles. He, too, wrote to *The Magnet*, of his experiments and faith in the supernormal powers of pathetism. ". . . I have been engaged in pathetising," he wrote, "principally for the cure of diseases; yet, whenever I have found the sight of such persons to be under the influence of pathetism, I have made it a point, during the time necessary for them to remain in it, to study this remarkable phenomenon; and it has always given me pleasure on similar occasions, to exhibit its peculiarities to others who were desirous of witnessing it. My audiences have with but few exceptions, been of a private nature, and were composed generally, of the most obdurate and inveterate skeptics, requiring me to make many, and often repeated experiments, with such care and circumspection as their unbelief warranted. . . . I have been able to gather a sufficient number of facts to overwhelm and convince me that their ability to discern, without the aid of their eyes, is, indeed, true, beyond the possibility of a doubt. I have been extremely guarded

in my own experiments; so much so, that I would not permit a soul to enter the room, after having had them place various articles in boxes, of which I had not the slightest knowledge; yet after taking each box into my hand promiscuously, and having successively asked questions as to their contents, to my utter astonishment, I found the answers correct, notwithstanding some of the articles were of such nature as to make guessing out of the question " (19, pp. 15-17).

Another letter, unsigned, to *The Magnet* spoke of the " mental powers of clairvoyants ". There are, said the writer, great differences in the powers of various clairvoyants. Some see clearly, some become confused, some get angry. He then went on to tell of an experiment in January 1842 in Hartford, Conn., in which a married woman was involved. The lady was intelligent, cultivated and of good character. When introduced to a famous lawyer, she began discussing legal questions with him, in a sophisticated and witty manner. In the midst of the conversation, a man placed his hand behind her head without actually touching it, and, the lady, embarrassed, was unable thereafter to continue her brilliant conversation until the hand was removed. The magnetizer then placed his hand on the lady's forehead, and she resumed her conversation. When magnetized again, the lady was able to carry on a scientific conversation and to sing in both French and German (20, pp. 191-192).

Under the heading " Extraordinary Instance of Clairvoyance ", a letter signed " Philomathia " told of a lady, a Mrs. S. of a village in Michigan, who in January 1843 found her gold watch missing from her living-room table. It had been taken one evening when no one was in the room or had been seen going into the room. Mrs. S. and her husband suspected no one. An unsuccessful search continued for many weeks, and the theft was finally forgotten. But in the spring Mr. D. B., a famous scholar and believer in magnetism, visited the village on a lecture tour, and accompanying him was a young man who was an excellent clairvoyant. Mr. S., husband of the lady who lost the watch, was permitted to communicate with the clairvoyant and asked him about the missing watch. The clairvoyant first refused to answer, but then he started to reveal what he knew. He suspected C. C., who had lived in the same house and had worked for Mrs. S. He further revealed that the watch was then in Amsterdam, N.Y. C. C., he continued, worked in Mr. S.'s office, and he was the man who stole the watch. Mr. S. refused to believe this, for C. C. was, in his opinion, a man of unimpeachable character. Late that summer C. C. became ill, feared he was going

to die, sent for an Episcopal clergyman, confessed he had stolen the watch and had sold it to his brother in Amsterdam (21, p. 206).

One of the avid readers of these testimonials in *The Magnet* and one of the greatest admirers of *The Magnet's* founder, La Roy Sunderland, was K. D. D. Dickerson, a New Englander, apparently from New Hampshire, who, in his volume on mesmerism, published in 1843, sums up the progress of that science to that time. The full title of that work is revealing: *The Philosophy of Mesmerism, or Animal Magnetism. Being a Compilation of Facts Ascertained by Experience, and Drawn from the Writings of the Most Celebrated Magnetisers in Europe and America. Intended to Facilitate the Honest Inquirer After Truth, and Promote Happiness of Mankind, By Diffusing the Knowledge of Nature's Wisest Laws and Most Benevolent Institutions.* (22). The dedication reads as follows: "To the Rev. La Roy Sunderland of New York, Author of the Magnet, The Bold Defender of the Truth, Who by Studying Nature In all Its Varied Forms, has won for himself imperishable fame, unlocked the avenues of the mind, and by the Miraculous powers of mesmerism, has shown men they are immortal . . .".

Dickerson then goes on to note that mesmerism is advancing in the United States, but slowly. "We, as a people", he wrote, "are much behind the enlightened nations of Europe in a knowledge of this power." He speaks of Poyen's early work on mesmerism, describing him as "a French gentleman of fine talents . . . who was reasonably successful in magnetising Miss Gleason of Pawtucket, who was one of the best magnetic subjects ever produced in the United States. . . . Miss Gleason is now living in Boston, and while in the magnetic state examines the internal diseases of persons, and has been successful in prescribing remedies for the same" (see pp. 10, 18).

He then speaks of Dr. Robert Collyer, known as "the champion of mesmerism in America". Collyer was a bold man who stood up to ridicule, stated Dickerson, and when lecturing in Boston in the spring of 1841 attracted large audiences. That city's believers in magnetism, he continues, "number the most respectable portion of the city". Other famous mesmerists of the day, in addition to those already mentioned in these pages, were, Dickerson went on, the Rev. John Pierpont, Dr. Gilbert, and Rev. Dods, all of Boston; Dr. Shattuck of Lowell, Massachusetts, who magnetized a Lowell lady so effectively that she suffered no pain when a large tumor was removed from her shoulder; a Mrs. Fetgus of Boston, who had as a subject a girl who though blind from birth was able in the magnetic state to see and describe a wide variety of articles; Drs. W. Lewis,

A. Flint, Francis Dana, William Ingalls, Gregerson and Ball, all of New York; and John Neal and Professor Ingraham of Portland, Maine.

Collyer's work and reputation should be noted in somewhat greater detail, for he lectured frequently and to many large groups. Over the years his audiences must have totaled in the aggregate tens of thousands, and even more. Sunderland, as already noted, was an important figure in nineteenth-century mesmerism in America, founder of its best known publication, *The Magnet*, and a passionate believer, but he had a great distaste for public performances in which proof of mesmerism could be offered visually. Collyer, however, seems to have relished meeting the public from the platform, and he is said to have converted thousands even as he endured the taunts of probably thousands more. Collyer was a Doctor of Medicine and a member of the Massachusetts Medical Society. His 1843 volume on mesmerism, like so many others published in that period, reveals a great deal about the period and the men and the writers on mesmerism by the very titles of their books. Collyer's book, published in Boston, was called *Psychography, or the Embodiment of Thought: with an analysis of Phreno-Magnetism, "Neurology", and Mental Hallucination, including rules to govern and produce the magnetic state*. The volume contains a prefatory letter dated Philadelphia, 1 May 1843, and addressed to Dr. Winslow Lewis of Boston, apparently another medical man who had defended Collyer against some very vociferous public critics. "You were the friend in need," he salutes Lewis. "Yes, when a malicious and unprincipled herd would have crushed me, you came to the rescue. You knew me to be engaged in the advocacy of a solemn truth, one which must revolutionize the false philosophy of past ages; one which opens to man the secret of his immortality . . . one which, in a medical point of view, will tend more to alleviate suffering humanity than all the multitudes of medicaments, from the time of Galen to the present day. It is scarce three years since I publicly espoused the cause. I was heralded with scoffs, jeers, licentious ribaldry, ridicule, and all the artillery which puny scribblers could bring to bear. . . . Their combined efforts have been abortive. Thousands and tens of thousands of the most intelligent have been converted; and even many of the most savage in their denunciation have made humble recantation of their error. . . ."

The book contains many testimonials to Collyer's skill as a magnetizer. For example, John Parshall, from Canandaigua, New York, writing on 5 January 1843, states that "I do solemnly declare,

that Dr. Collyer can act on any part of my body. Though I am aware of his intention, I cannot resist the action of his will. He can cause me to feel hot or cold, wet or dry, tall or short, stout or spare; and, in fact, he can change my condition at any time."

Collyer gives some "rules to be observed with regard to inducing the congestive . . . or mesmeric state", and they include these admonitions; ". . . You must not use much effort on a feeble, excitable constitution, for by so doing you would increase, rather than soothe, the patient. . . . It is well to have more than a third person in the room, and that person should be a relative or intimate acquaintance. . . . Never allow your patient to be handled, or even touched by a third party during the . . . congestive state. . . . Never allow any person to be acted on by an operator who has any diseased condition . . . for, depend on it, the recipient will be apt to imbibe the identical disease. . . ."

Collyer speaks proudly in the volume of a meeting held at the Masonic Temple in Boston on 22 June 1841, when Dr. Abner Phelps, Dr. Winslow Lewis, Jr., and Francis Dana "were appointed a committee to select twenty-four gentlemen of three learned professions in the city, for the purpose of investigating the claims of animal magnetism, as exhibited by Dr. Collyer". At the end of its deliberations this committee resolved that while it refrains "from expressing any decisive opinion as to the science or principle of animal magnetism, they freely confess that, in the experiments of Dr. Collyer, certain appearances have been presented, which cannot be explained on the supposition of collusion or by a reference to any physiological principles known to them. . . . William Ingalls, Chairman; S. F. Plimpton, Secretary." Collyer adds to this testimonial, "This is the only public document ever given on this continent with reference to animal magnetism, and the only one in the world where the vote was unanimous" (23, p. 38).

Dr. Daniel Drake of the Medical Institute of Louisville, Kentucky, reported three years later on another series of experiments with animal magnetism whose wonders had been vouched for by another committee in Louisville. In his volume, *Analytical Report of a Series of Experiments in Mesmeric Somniloquism*, (24), he speaks of a young lady who had been brought to Louisville as a public performer but had been induced to permit a series of mesmeric experiments to be performed on her. Nine men of the highest standing, in addition to Drake, a Doctor of Medicine, were selected to "ascertain the truth of the assertion that the individual who has been brought by the manipulation of Mesmerism into a somnambule

and somniloquent state, is susceptible of the thoughts and feelings of the person who may be in communication, independent of all known modes of intercourse". Four afternoons were apparently devoted to studying this lady's reactions. The widest variety of questions were put to her—"What am I looking at? . . . What do I see?" The report of the committee, composed of men of the highest repute, according to Dr. Drake, concluded as follows: "From a state of beatific inspiration, the devoted somniloquist is degraded to the condition of a mere passive and unresisting recipient of the thoughts, feelings and will of those in communication. Her ideas are no longer her own; she is compelled to feel what others feel;—she cannot move but at their bidding. The barriers of her mind are broken down, and 'blue spirits and black, white spirits, and gray', enter without opposition, and revel in its mansions without molestation. Her personal consciousness has become a *tertium quid*, composed of her own and that of another united. She is transformed into a spiritual hybrid, and loses her accountability both to God and man, as the laws of neither recognize such personality."

The publication of *A Treatise on Animal Magnetism* by Charles P. Johnson (25) just prior to the Drake volume brought to light more cases of successful magnetization in another part of the country. One case was from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and was reported by the *Lancaster Intelligencer* in June 1842. A group of citizens, including P. Cassidy, M.D., and William B. Fahnestock, M.D., testified to wondrous mesmeric phenomena they had witnessed on Friday, 24 June 1842, at the home of Mr. John L. Thompson. The subject was a fifteen-year-old girl living with the Thompson family, a girl of little education who knew nothing whatever about the nature of magnetism even though she had heard a great deal of talk about it in the Thompson family. She also expressed emphatically her complete lack of faith in this new science, and yet indicated a desire to be magnetized even if, as she said, she doubted it could be accomplished.

In the experiment to which she submitted, the girl was seated in a rocking chair, after which Mr. Johnson attempted to place her in a state of magnetic sleep. After almost forty-five minutes had elapsed, during which she obviously resisted the magnetic influence, by means which included keeping her eyes open, she fell soundly asleep. "After some time," continues the account in the *Lancaster Intelligencer*, "during which the persons present began to believe she was only in a natural sleep, her arms were raised, and they remained in that position. Mr. Johnson then put tobacco in his mouth, when she presented the appearance of great disgust. Mr. J.'s

hair was then pulled, when she writhed in contortions of apparently great pain; he was pricked, and the same result followed; her hand was then pricked with a pin, and pinched, but she gave no signs of pain. Mr. Johnson then fixed his attention upon one of the persons present, whom she could not see, when she stated the color of his dress correctly; stated his business, and what was his name, upon being asked so to do " (25, pp. 30-31).

Another experiment was performed on another person, a lady, by Mr. Johnson, and again with successful results. This lady had never been to Philadelphia, but when placed in magnetic sleep and taken to Philadelphia in that state, she readily identified the United States bank there as a marble building and the Girard College structure as an unfinished building. She also described Chestnut Street in Philadelphia. Mr. Johnson finally aroused her, but only partially, demagnetizing her face and brain, but leaving the rest of her body fully magnetized. As a result, she was unable to lower her arms, and on being told to get up from her chair, said that she was unable to do that and, indeed, could not move her feet. It was only when Mr. Johnson "dissipated" the magnetic influence from her body that she was able to move her arms and feet freely (25, pp. 31-32).

A reported incident in the earlier history of mesmerism in the United States pertains to Dr. Lyman B. Larkin, a physician of Wrentham, Massachusetts, who in 1844 attempted to employ magnetism to cure his servant girl, Mary Jane, of "fits", the term employed for what might have been manifestations of epilepsy or emotional outbursts which caused the body to tremble. Larkin, a general practitioner, had for some time before that been interested in magnetism as a therapy for disease and he had conducted experiments which had convinced him of its effectiveness. Mary Jane obviously presented an opportunity for him to test his approach with magnetism. Emma Hardinge, an important historian of American spiritualism, tells the story in her volume, *Modern American Spiritualism: A Twenty Years' Record of the Communion Between Earth and the World of Spirits* (New York, 1870).

At the beginning, says Emma Hardinge, Mary Jane did not respond to Larkin's treatment in too striking fashion. However, in time "clairvoyance of a most remarkable character supervened; she was enabled during the mystic sleep to describe her own state, and that of a number of the doctor's patients, of whom she had never heard. When any difficult case was presented to Dr. Larkin, he had only, by a few passes, to place the girl in a magnetic sleep,

to insure her giving a remarkable diagnosis of the disease he wished to inquire about, and often, in addition, a valuable and effective prescription. Although Dr. Larkin was unable precisely to determine what were the best conditions for the prosecution of his magnetic researches with this clairvoyant, there were certain results growing out of them which were to him—at that time—as unaccountable as they were spontaneous and unlooked for.”

The first phenomena that could not be explained were the loud knockings in the room when Mary Jane was in trance. They seemed to come from furniture sufficiently far enough removed from her to preclude any suspicion that she caused those knockings. Dr. Larkin was also puzzled by Mary Jane’s telling him that when in trance, or “sleep”, as she called that state, there appeared a beautiful fairy she called Katy. Sometimes there were other fairies around Katy, but none was as beautiful as Katy. It was this same Katy who identified diseases and told how they could be cured. All the fairies, added Mary Jane, came from Germany.

The author then goes on to say that under the influence of Katy and the other fairies Mary Jane was “skilful and sometimes philosophical and exalted, but occasionally an influence seemed to possess her of the most profane and mischievous character”. It was then that she uttered “as if moved by automatic action . . . the most blasphemous oaths and rude speeches; at the same time the furniture was often moved about violently by unseen hands, and heavy weights were lifted from place to place”. Once, with the whole family at home, with the magnetized Mary Jane on a couch and with every door in the house closed, a heavy flat iron last seen in the kitchen materialized in the presence of the family in the living room and, furthermore, when Mrs. Larkin requested that the iron disappear, it vanished with equal suddenness and reappeared in the kitchen, again with every door to the kitchen remaining closed.

Mary Jane said these and other “manifestations” were caused by a “sailor boy” she saw and who made her use vile language.

Mrs. Hardinge writes that this “power, whatever it might be”, followed Dr. Larkin on his professional rounds so that when visiting a patient in a lonely house on a hill one day, he heard poundings on the front door to the house which persisted throughout his visit. He could not account for them at the time. Later the owners of the house suffered “serious misfortunes” and they were convinced those poundings were “supernatural warnings”. Dr. Larkin, however, thought they were an occult force within himself or his environment. Then there was the occasion when Larkin came back



Andrew Jackson Davis (1826-1910)

[To face p. 32]

from a medical meeting thirty miles from his home. His wife greeted him by asking him to look in on the entranced Mary Jane in the adjoining room, where she had been waiting to see him. When the doctor entered the room, Mary Jane first greeted him with great laughter from her sailor boy, but then she went on and told him all about the events of the evening with great accuracy, "even to his trifling vexation at the salmon being underdone at dinner, and the roast pig being eaten up before his turn came to be helped".

Not only did Katy and the sailor boy speak through Mary Jane, but many spirits spoke through her also, and they revealed the most precise and accurate information about the names, places of birth and death and other details regarding men and women she had never known. Thus did Larkin, an apparently facile writer, compose a history of 270 spirits, "many of whose statements he took exceeding pains to prove, and in every instance found the description invariably correct in the minutest details".

Mary Jane "in her normal state", wrote the doctor, was "illiterate and unimaginative", but entranced she was "instructive and occasionally scientific".

In 1846, when again allegedly under the sailor's influence, Mary Jane's limbs were thrown out of joint "in several directions", easily and without pain. But her "invisible tormentor" could not set the limbs right and even Larkin, "an experienced surgeon", had to call professional help as well as several strong aides. One day, the girl's knees and wrists were twice thrown out of joint, and this was accompanied by loud laughter and profane jokes.

Another day, after "a very dangerous dislocation", the doctor who had assisted Larkin said he was in a great hurry to attend to other duties and hoped he would not be needed again, whereupon Mary Jane, speaking through her sailor, unburdened herself with some ugly language, told the doctor to stay and do his work, and then, right there in his presence, a limb was dislocated before the eyes of the doctor who wanted to leave.

Rumors of the goings-on in the Larkin house got around the countryside, with the usual ugly exaggerations and innuendoes. And so, in the fall of 1847, a delegation of nine men, led by a Wrentham minister, called on Larkin and demanded to know the true details. Larkin told them calmly precisely what had happened. But the committee was not satisfied with his reply, and insisted that Larkin confess that he had been guilty of scandalous behavior. Larkin refused, but offered to permit two or three members of the committee to live in his home for a period, with board and room

free, so that they could observe the strange phenomena themselves and then report accordingly to the entire committee. The ministers refused to accept this proposal, but they investigated further in their own manner, insisting on entering the Larkin home at all hours for many months and plying Mary Jane with countless questions. Dr. Larkin finally ended this torture of Mary Jane and said he would tolerate an orderly investigation only.

A Reverend Mr. Thatcher and his wife, orthodox and impeccable church folk, thereupon moved into the Larkin home for a period of organized study of the servant girl who was behaving so strangely, at least according to her employer. The first night Reverend Thatcher began by offering prayers, kneeling beside Mary Jane, but in the midst of these prayers of thanks to the Lord, Mary Jane became entranced and she in turn "offered prayers for herself with a fervor and beauty that melted the whole party into sympathetic tears". The clergyman and his wife, continues Mrs. Hardinge in her account of the incident, became "entirely convinced of the sincerity and purity of the life and intention of Dr. Larkin and his family, and the veritable nature of the occult phenomena transpiring in the person of the girl".

After a week of thorough investigation, the Reverend and Mrs. Thatcher left the Larkin home and prepared a circular that was sent to every minister within a twenty-mile radius, telling of Mr. Thatcher's "entire conviction of the supra-mundane character of the events he had witnessed". Mr. Thatcher also absolved all concerned and hitherto suspected of "fraud, deception, or connivance", and then he added that every clergyman should give these phenomena the "most serious and candid investigation".

The ministers of the entire committee remained dubious and paid little attention to this letter. The Reverend Horace James (1818-75) of Wrentham, an enemy and slanderer of Larkin and convinced of his guilt, persuaded three magistrates to organize a court, which in turn demanded that Larkin appear before it, while Mary Jane was forcibly removed from the Larkin home and charged with "necromancy". She was convicted of that charge and of sorcery as well and was sentenced to sixty days solitary confinement in the Dedham jail.

Dr. Larkin was not sentenced by the court, but the ministers expelled him from his church and told him he could not return until he recanted and made a full confession of his crimes as an accomplice of Mary Jane. Deeply attached to his church, the unfortunate doctor did recant even though he said he did "believe in the com-

munion of spirits; did realize that they could and had through the organism of Mary Jane again and again communicated with him ". And yet the doctor signed the documents that denied this, saying it was the biggest lie ever written. The clergy apparently knew of his true feelings, but they were satisfied with his signed confession, and permitted him to return to the church he loved.

Mary Jane died a short time after these events. Emma Hardinge tells in her history that she obtained these facts in conversation with Dr. Larkin. He confessed to her he was ashamed of himself for signing the document denying phenomena he had witnessed.¹

ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS AND THE ELECTRO-PSYCHOLOGISTS

By the mid-nineteenth century it had become increasingly clear that mesmerism in America was becoming less scientific and more individualistic. At the beginning of the century, the French pioneers of mesmerism in the United States, Du Commun and Poyen, championed a cause, a new science, a new therapy, that obviously derived from the work of Mesmer himself. Similarly, the physicians of that period and of the years following, up to about 1850, practised a form of mesmerism based on more or less scientific principles. They, too, derived from Mesmer and the European scientific tradition, and indeed, their best known representative, Dr. Charles Caldwell of Louisville, Kentucky, visited Europe, observed the work of mesmerizers there before returning to America and pronouncing it one of the great scientific discoveries of the age. To be sure, scientific mesmerism was to persist and physicians were to continue to use it as an effective therapy, and a century later it was to evolve into hypnosis, carefully tested and approved by the most reputable medical organizations. But in the fifth decade of the nineteenth century, as Frank Podmore points out, its possibilities as a therapy

¹ [I am not altogether satisfied that this case occurred as Emma Hardinge described it and attempts to corroborate it from other sources have not proved successful. I am deeply indebted to the Librarian of the Dedham Historical Society, Miss Marion K. Conant, for examining local records, but she has found nothing in local histories or even in the columns of the local county paper which mentions the case. There is no doubt, however, that Dr. Lyman B. Larkin was a physician working in Wrentham at the period and that the Rev. Horace James was a minister at Wrentham church from 1843 to 1853. In an obituary notice of James published in 1876 there was no mention of his connection with the case. Until later confirmation is obtainable the story should be regarded with reserve. *Ed.*]

attracted far less attention than its power for "spiritual revelations". Thereafter, Podmore continues, the clairvoyant was "consulted less and less frequently as a physician and more and more as a seer hidden from the vulgar gaze. . . . The belief in a fluid, which had been supported in the previous decade by experiments outshining in grotesqueness . . . still persisted; and for the first few years the question of Fluids *versus* Spirits as an explanation of the marvellous doings at dark *séances* was hotly debated in the American Spiritualist journals. Gradually, however, the Spiritualist view prevailed, the theory of a magnetic fluid suffered euthanasia, and the clairvoyants were left in possession of the field" (6, pp. 218-220).

These seers, or prophets, or independent individualists, include several uniquely American figures who must be noted in any survey of mesmerism in America. They include Andrew Jackson Davis, Thomas Lake Harris, John Bovee Dods, James Stanley Grimes, and Joseph Rodes Buchanan.

Davis was born in Blooming Grove, Orange County, New York, in 1826. His father was an uneducated shoemaker who earned very little at his trade and had to supplement his earnings by taking on harvesting chores at nearby farms and other odd jobs. There was a time when he also drank heavily. Davis's mother had little education also, but despite many physical ailments she had a certain strength of character, strong religious beliefs, and, above all, spiritualist tendencies. It was a hard life and the family apparently moved frequently in that spacious upstate New York area. But the Davises must have remained for a considerable period in Poughkeepsie, for young Davis became known later as the "Poughkeepsie Seer". He, too, had little formal education. It is said by some that he attended public school for a total of five months. He also attended the Sunday school of a Dutch Reformed Church and was repelled by the doctrines of predestination and damnation taught there. He seems to have been little influenced by formal religion and was more impressed with the phenomena of nature: animals, trees, snow, rain, and, as Podmore points out, alluding to Davis's autobiography, *The Magic Staff*, "even human affection" in so far as it fulfilled sensual needs.

At an early age Davis revealed himself as an occasional sleep-walker and one who heard voices which directed him to take up specific tasks and duties. In 1843, when J. Stanley Grimes lectured on mesmerism in Poughkeepsie, he attempted to place Davis in a hypnotic trance, but was unsuccessful. However, a local tailor, William Levingston, who had also attended the Grimes lecture,

successfully placed the young man into a trance and there Davis revealed immediately unusual clairvoyant powers. He read newspapers and told the time on watches he could not see, and diagnosed diseases in those who consulted him and Levingston, who had given up his tailoring business so that he and his newly discovered clairvoyant could devote themselves to the cure of human ailments. Davis claimed that in the clairvoyant trance he could see clearly the blood and nerves of the human body, the very fibres of leaves and trees, the iron and other metal ore under the earth, and even tigers hunting in the jungles of India. He also prescribed the skin of rats and frogs and the fat of weasels, as well as drugs, for the cure of disease, claiming that he acquired this great knowledge of curative agents by merely "looking through space directly into nature's laboratory, or else into medical establishments". After this period of diagnosing and curing disease, he fell into a deep and prolonged trance during which Galen and Swedenborg visited him and offered their assistance in his work. Galen later came to him alone and promised him a "magic staff", in the midst of which experience Davis saw before him in great letters these words: "Behold, Here is Thy Magic Staff, Under All Circumstances Keep an Even Mind".

After only modest success as the operator of a "clairvoyant clinic", Davis abandoned the art of healing and turned to writing. He lectured and wrote while in trance, and it is said that during a two-year period in New York City he delivered 157 lectures in the entranced state. All were copied verbatim by a scribe he had engaged for the purpose, the Reverend William Fishbough. During his long life—he died in 1910—he wrote more than thirty full-length works which border on both spiritualism and mesmerism. The most important of these are probably his autobiography, *The Magic Staff* (1857), and *The Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelations, and a Voice to Mankind* (1847). This latter work is, as Podmore says, an entranced clairvoyant's history of the universe from the primordial nebulae and planets to the formation of the earth geologically and the early history of man. For the student of mesmerism, Davis has special interest when he writes in this work, "Man, the final cause of nature, is in himself, a microcosm; he is composed of particles and essences of all things...". More striking for the historian of mesmerism is Davis's *The Great Harmonia* (1852-66), which was not written in the entranced states and is the product of his later spiritualist period: "Disease," he wrote, "is the want of equilibrium in the circulation of the spiritual principle through the physical organization. In plainer language, disease is a discord, and the discord must

exist primarily in the spiritual forces by which the organism is actuated and governed."

The article on Davis in *The Dictionary of American Biography*, sums the man up concisely in this manner: "Davis belongs to the interregnum between mesmerism and spiritualism; he practised both but was wholly identified with neither. In common with transcendentalism and the idealistic socialism of the day, he preached social reconstruction as going hand in hand with spiritual regeneration. He gave modern spiritualism much of its phraseology and formulated its underlying principles" (26, vol. V, p. 105).

Thomas Lake Harris (1823-1906), who was associated with Davis for a period, is another figure of that Christian mystical tradition of the mid-nineteenth century. Frank Podmore rightly includes him in his volume, *From Mesmer to Christian Science*. Subject to great ecstasies, he often went into trance, and in that state, he claimed, created verse of considerable power, notably "The Hymn of Life's Completeness", and "A Lyric of the Golden Age". He was the organizer of the Independent Christian Church in New York in 1848, became for a period a devotee of Swedenborgianism, and helped found one of the early American utopian groups, the Brotherhood of the New Life, which operated a more or less self-sufficient colony in Amenia, New York in the early 1860s. He is noted here because he, too, illustrates how receptive America was during that period to the prophetic and the mystical types, with their kinship to mesmerism. However, Podmore notes that "Harris's 'inspiration', unlike that of his predecessors, owed nothing to Mesmerism; it does not appear that his trances or ecstasies were at any time of his life other than spontaneous" (6, p. 247).

The Universalist minister Joseph Rodes Buchanan (died 1899) is another figure who is part of this Christian mystical tradition, but he has a closer relationship to Mesmerism. In his book *Outlines of Lectures on the Neurological System of Anthropology*, published in Cincinnati in 1854, he presented his theory of *Nervaura*, described by Podmore as "a subtle emanation given off from the nervous system, which differed not only for each individual, but for each organ. *Nervaura*, as Buchanan explained it, stood in the scale of materiality midway between electricity and caloric on the one hand and will and consciousness on the other, being indeed the mediating link between the two sets of entities. Like other mundane forces, it could be transmitted from one organism to another through an iron bar; but it was so far akin to the purely spiritual energies that by means of the *Nervaura* radiating from the anterior and superior

cerebral centres ' an individual operates upon a nation and transmits his influence through succeeding centuries ' ” (9, i, p. 156).

It will be helpful to return briefly here to J. Stanley Grimes, whose lectures on Mesmerism in Poughkeepsie obviously influenced Andrew Jackson Davis. Grimes was the author of *Etherology, and the Phreno-Philosophy of Mesmerism and Magic Eloquence: Including a New Philosophy of Sleep and Consciousness. With a review of the pretensions of Phreno-Magnetism, Electro-Biology, &c.* The revised edition, edited by W. G. Le Duc, was published in Boston in 1850, and Grimes is described in it as “ Counsellor at Law, formerly President of the Western Phrenological Society, Professor of Medical Jurisprudence in the Castleton Medical College, and author of ‘ *A New System of Phrenology* ’ ”.

In his introduction to the revised edition, Le Duc says: “ The object of the author in writing this book was primarily to defend the peculiar system of Phrenology which he had discovered, from the implied attacks of Neurology and Phreno-Magnetism, as practised by Buchanan, Fowler and others ”. In the first section of the volume, following Le Duc’s observations, Grimes makes several pronouncements which reveal again something of the state and progress of the mesmeric art and science in America. “ 1, All the known phenomena of the universe,” he begins, “ may be referred to three general principles, viz.: *matter, motion and consciousness*. Every thing that we know is a modification of one or all of these three. 2, One portion of matter cannot influence another, nor can one mind influence another, but through the instrumentality of motion. 3, One thing cannot influence another with which it is not in contact, unless there is some material substance existing or passing between every portion of space which separates them—that is, no motion can be communicated from one body, nor from one mind to another, unless there is a material connection . . . ” (27, pp. 17-18).

He then went on to say that the planets influence each other and influence the earth also because the substance “ Etherium ” connects them and “ communicates light, heat, electricity, gravitation, and mental emotion, from one body to another, and from one mind to another ”. The science which studies these phenomena he called Etherology, and, he went on to say, “ Etheropathy is a term which I shall use to include all the phenomena which are known to the public under the various names of Mesmerism, Animal Magnetism, Neurology, Pathetism, Hypnotism, Catalepsy, Somnambulism, Clairvoyance . . . Etheropathy is the result of an abnormal condition of the constitution, a degenerated or morbid state. . . . Any rational

explanation of Etheropathy or Mesmerism must be based on the principle, that it is in every case a departure from, and violation of, the ordinary laws of man and the designs of the Creator."

John Bovee Dods (1795-1872), a native of New York and a spiritualist preacher, long interested in mediumship, psychic phenomena, and mesmerism, propounded yet another theory which is a valid part of the history of mesmerism in the United States. He had his own pulpit in Provincetown, Massachusetts, for a period, spoke to apparently sizable audiences in Boston, New York and other parts of the country, and even addressed audiences by special invitation of the Congress of the United States and the Legislature of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. He did not like the term Animal Magnetism and said he preferred "Spiritualism or Mental Electricity". Magnetism, he pointed out, had already proved itself as a pain-relieving agent. To be sure, the commission which had condemned Anton Mesmer attributed Mesmer's successes to the imagination, but Dods said that it requires much more than imagination to amputate limbs, extract teeth, set broken bones, and excise tumors without pain to the patient. "The magnetic principle," he continued, "is not of man, but one the creator established. . . . I believe the doctrine of one Saviour to be a perfect doctrine, and exactly adapted to the bodies as well as the souls of men. I believe that he is our example to follow, and as he went about doing good, healing sickness and relieving distress of the body as well as preaching the gospel to heal the normal maladies of the soul, so it is our duty to do the same . . ." (28, p. 60).

But Dods' name is even more closely associated with "vital electricity" and "electrical psychology" (cf. 29). Indeed, such distinguished Americans as United States Senators Sam Houston and Daniel Webster addressed an invitation to Dods on 12 February 1850, asking him to address members of a Congress on Electrical Psychology, "a department of science said to treat of the philosophy of disease, and the reciprocal action of *mind* and *matter* upon each other . . ." (29, p. 13).

By employing electrical psychology, Dods is said to have made his subjects believe that water was lemonade or vinegar or coffee. He could intoxicate them with water they drank by making them believe it was brandy. It is alleged also that he made people believe they were, temporarily, generals, Negroes, orators, statesmen. In Auburn, New York, according to newspapers of that community in 1850, he is said by means of electrical psychology to have cured of a stroke of palsy and other infirmities one Hiram Bostwick who for

a year and a half had hardly been able to walk, but who was walking a mile after a week of treatment by Dods. He also cured of a kind of blindness a lady in Auburn who had lost her sight three years earlier. All of this came about, Dods told his audiences, through electrical psychology, by means of which "one human being can, through a certain nervous influence, obtain and exercise a power over another, so as to perfectly control his voluntary motions and muscular force; and also produce various impressions on his mind, however extravagant, ludicrous, or wild—and that too while he is in a perfectly wakeful state . . . it is one of the most powerful remedial agents to alleviate the pains of the suffering, and to cure those diseases that set the power of medicine, and the skill of the ablest practitioner, at defiance" (29, p. 29). Then Dods became more specific and proclaimed: "I can produce the testimony of hundreds, that this science has, in fifty minutes, restored to Lucy Ann Allen, of Lynchburg, Virginia, the use of her limbs; who had not walked a step in eighteen years, nor had she even been able to raise herself up from her pillow so as to sit in her bed for more than fourteen years. Such is the nature and intrinsic grandeur of this SCIENCE; such are the experiments and facts connected with it . . . (op. cit., p. 30).

But, according to Dods, this science was not the same as Mesmerism. "MESMERISM is the doctrine of *sympathy*; ELECTRICAL PSYCHOLOGY is the doctrine of IMPRESSIONS; in Mesmerism there is a sympathy so perfect between the magnetizer and the subject, that what he sees, the subject sees—what he hears, the subject hears—what he feels, the subject feels—what he tastes, the subject tastes—and what he smells, the subject also smells; and lastly, what the magnetizer wills, is likewise the will of his subject. But the person in the electro-psychological state has no such sympathies with his operator. His *sight, hearing, feeling, taste, and smell* are entirely independent of the operator, and he continually exerts his will against him and resists him with all his muscular force. The person who is aroused from the mesmeric slumber has no remembrance of what transpired in it; while the person in the electro-psychological state is a witness of his own actions, and knows all that transpired. The person in the mesmeric state can hear no voice but that of his magnetizer. . . . But the person in the electro-psychological state can hear and converse with all as usual . . . no person is naturally in the mesmeric state, but thousands are naturally in the electro-psychological state, and live and die in it. MESMERISM and SOMNAMBULISM are *identical*. . . . Though the experiments of both these states are performed by the same nervous fluid, yet this does not render the two

sciences identical, any more than they are rendered identical with fits, or insanity, which are caused by the same nervous force' (op. cit., pp. 31-32).

Dods stated that one person in twenty-five in the United States is naturally in the electro-psychological state, and that one in twelve is partially in that state. Those in the full state can be cured easily of all functional diseases without suffering any pain whatever, but even the others can be put in this state by magnetization with copper, iron, lead, and other metals.

The science of electro-psychology can be taught, he said, in five two-hour lessons. He taught this science to men at a fee of \$10 for the series of lessons, and to women for \$5, but had his students pledge that they in turn would teach the science only to those of high moral character (op. cit., p. 14).

Thus did mesmerism advance in the United States. As we have seen, it attracted mystics and religious practitioners, spiritualists and physicians, and it had a wide appeal, attracting both backwoods farmers in upstate New York and in Kentucky, sophisticated audiences in Boston, and reputable political figures in the United States Congress itself.

But mesmerism, suggestion, faith-healing, all the other names under which some form of the original discovery of Anton Mesmer presented itself to the American people, had not yet attracted a great representative mass of the people and held them thereafter as devoted followers and believers. But such a development was about to manifest itself, first in the obscure figure of a New England clockmaker who dabbled in magnetism, Phineas P. Quimby, and later his most famous patient, Mary Baker Eddy, founder of Christian Science, a world religion which has spread from nineteenth-century America to every continent and continues to flourish as it approaches the end of its first century. The work of Quimby and Mrs. Eddy is a proper part of mesmerism in the United States and even though the growth of the Church may be a study for religious historians, the obvious force of Mesmer's original idea on the origins of Christian Science must be considered here, as, indeed, Frank Podmore considered it in his penetrating survey, *Mesmerism and Christian Science*, almost sixty years ago (7).

PHINEAS P. QUIMBY AND CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

Phineas Parkhurst Quimby (1802-1866), the New England mental healer whose most famous patient was Mary Baker Eddy,

was a mesmerist before he became the first important mental healer of the first half of the nineteenth century. Many of the early American mesmerists became spiritualists, but, as Podmore points out, "there remained some whose interest in healing was greater than their love of the marvellous" (6, p. 249). Quimby was one of these. Other mesmerists drew closer to orthodox medicine and ultimately to psychology, rejecting sometimes the very terms "mesmerism" and "hypnotism" in favor of "suggestion", a term which persists in twentieth-century medicine and psychology. But Quimby was the pioneer of the group of healers who "have from the first fastened their attention on the internal or psychical side of the matter. They have all along recognized that the healing process was essentially an act of the patient's will, imagination, or faith. Science and Superstition can now almost shake hands, so narrow is the ditch that divides the two camps" (6, p. 250).

This important figure, still revered by many and increasingly the object of considerable study by scholars and historians, was a man of little schooling. *The Dictionary of American Biography* says that in his entire life he received six weeks of schooling, but Ernest Sutherland Bates adds in this sketch that "among all the early American healers and eccentric philosophers his reputation stands the highest for beauty of character and honesty of purpose".

Quimby was born in Lebanon, New Hampshire, in 1802, the son of a blacksmith. At the age of two he was taken to Belfast, Maine, where he spent his boyhood. He began work early as a clockmaker's apprentice and learned his craft eagerly and expertly. He married and was the father of four children. Mechanically inclined, he revealed gifts as an inventor rather than as a healer or student of the human mind. Nevertheless, as this gentle family man pursued successfully the work of watchmaking and clockmaking, he apparently read widely in the sciences and finally came to his most absorbing interest, the human mind and its inexplicable powers. Some have suggested that he may have been led to this all-consuming study by his recovery from illness at an early age without the aid of medical science.

Quimby's reading excited his interest in the mesmerists, their lectures and exhibitions, then so common in towns throughout New England and other parts of America. By 1838, when Charles Poyen visited Belfast to lecture on the new science, the thirty-six-year-old clockmaker was beginning to believe that he too had considerable mesmeric powers. The work and lectures of Dr. R. H. Collyer, a physician, also stimulated him to pursue further the mesmeric

idea, not only by intensive study of the literature of the subject, but by his own demonstrations. He became a professional mesmeric healer and acquired as his subject a clairvoyant and clairaudient young man of nineteen, Lucius Burkmar, who, when in trance induced by Quimby, assisted Quimby in diagnosing illness in patients, who came to him in increasing numbers, and even in assisting surgeons by bringing about mesmeric anesthesia during an operation. Increasingly successful in this new profession, he gave up clockmaking, toured New England with Lucius, acquiring wide repute as a healer and a man of utter honesty.

At the request of a physician, who wished a diagnosis of a patient's illness, Quimby once mesmerized Lucius, who indicated in trance that herb tea would cure the illness, as it did when the physician gave the patient the tea. But why had not the patient been cured when the physician had given him the same tea earlier after his own diagnosis? Quimby was as confused as was the physician, and he set out to penetrate the true reasons for this phenomenon. Ervin Seale, in his introduction to *The Quimby Manuscripts*, goes on with the story in this manner: "He [Quimby] suspected that the healing properties were suggestive, although of course, he did not use that word. From this instance and others, Quimby discovered that Lucius was reading the minds of those around him and reporting what he read. In other words, in his mesmeric state he was susceptible to the impressions and ideas and beliefs, whether scientific or erroneous, present in the minds of those around him. Thus, in the instance described, Lucius was reading the mind of the doctor and prescribing exactly what the doctor felt to be the right medicine for such an ailment. And, since it is always more impressive to most people to hear a man speaking out of the trance state than to hear him speak out of his normal state, his words carried great suggestive weight. Quimby discovered that a lot of this kind of thing was going on in the practice of mesmerism and people were not being enlightened by it but rather, confused" (4, p. ix).

In 1862, in a letter to the *Portland Daily Advertiser* (17 February), Quimby recalled his discovery that Burkmar's diagnoses were simply a description of what Quimby or the patient himself knew of the ailment, and Quimby also discovered at this time that any medicine prescribed by Burkmar would heal the patient. "This led me", wrote Quimby in his letter to the Portland paper, "to investigate . . . and arrive at the stand I now take: that the cure is not in the medicine, but in the confidence of the doctor or the medium". Quimby was to comment further on this elsewhere, and it is well to

quote him at length: "I then became a medium myself, but not like my subject. I retained my own consciousness and at the same time took the feelings of my patient. Thus I was able to unlock the secret which has been a mystery for ages to mankind. I found I had the power of not only feeling their aches and pains, but the state of their mind. I discovered that ideas took form and the patient was affected just according to the impression contained in the idea. For example, if a person lost a friend at sea the shock upon their nervous system would disturb the fluids of their body and create around them a vapor, and in that are all their ideas, right or wrong. This vapor or fluid contains the identity of the person" (38, p. 153).

Mary Baker Eddy's most recent biographer, Mr. R. Peel, suggests very understandably that Quimby was probably influenced by John Bovee Dods' book, *The Philosophy of Electrical Psychology* (1850). He also recalls that Dods had at one time "lured Lucius Burkmar away from Quimby to become his own mesmeric subject, although Burkmar later returned to Quimby until the latter finally dispensed with him altogether" (38, p. 153). Mrs. Eddy's biographer also remarks that Dods "anticipates" Quimby when, he, Dods, writes as follows in his *Electrical Psychology*: "I have . . . proved that the mind by shrinking back on itself in fear, melancholy, and grief, in the day of adversity . . . can disturb the electro-nervous fluid, and allow it to concentrate itself upon any organ of the body and engender disease. If, then, the mind can disturb the equilibrium of the nervo-electric force and call it to some organ so as to produce disease, then the mind can also disperse it, equalize the circulation, and restore health. . . . Medicine produces a physical impression on the system, but never heals a disease" (38, p. 154). More than half a century before Sigmund Freud unlocked the subconscious, Quimby in his unscholarly, unprofessional manner was nevertheless penetrating the unconscious also, and his observations must be recalled. The human mind has two levels, said Quimby, with thought a manifestation of the upper level, and belief associated with the lower level. "Man is made up of truth and belief," he concluded, and that level of mind which asserts itself reflects the experience and character of the person at that moment.

To prove his theories he experimented on his somnambulist, Lucius Burkmar. In his simple scientific manner he tried to isolate Lucius from other people during the course of his experiments so that the influence of other minds on the young man's mind would be minimized. "My object," he says, "was to discover what a belief was made of and what thought was. This I found out by

thinking of something Lucius could describe so that I knew he must see or get the information in some way." When he visualized a wild animal, Lucius received the image so realistically that he was terror-stricken even after being told it was merely Quimby's imagination that summoned up the wild animal image he, Lucius, saw. Quimby was equally effective when he visualized a lemon for Lucius and made Lucius suck those imaginary lemons continually until he tired of them. This was the method Quimby used to break Lucius of the habit of sucking on lemons in public, much as children today chew gum to the distress of their elders (4, pp. x, xi).

Obviously pleased and stimulated by the discovery that he could will his thoughts on the mind of another, he wrote in the journal he kept: "... at last I found out that mind was something that could be changed. I called it spiritual matter, because I found it could be condensed into a solid and receive a name called ' tumor ', and by the same power under a different direction it might be dissolved and made to disappear. This showed me that man was governed by two powers or directions, one by a belief, the other by a science. The creating of disease is under the superstition of man's belief. [Conventional] cures have been by the same remedy. Disease being brought about through a false belief, it took another false belief to correct the first; so that instead of destroying the evil, the remedy created more " (4, p. 61). Thus, after about four years of traveling with Lucius Burkmarr, did Quimby discover his own clairvoyant powers, and take the next major step in his astonishing career. He had already abandoned clockmaking, and now he ended his association with Lucius. He gave up (or thought he had given up) mesmerism, and now, from about 1847 to his death in 1866, he would devote himself to mental healing, which he gave a variety of names, including " Science of Christ ", " Christian Science ", " Science of Health ", and " Science of Health and Happiness ". In 1859 he moved to the larger city of Portland, Maine, opened an office there and enjoyed a large practice. He was known throughout New England and in many other parts of the United States. Mary Patterson, who was later to found the Christian Science Church, turned out to be his most famous patient. Many others, perhaps thousands, sought him out and were glad to call him " Doctor " and to give thanks for his effecting cures which their physicians could not bring about.

One of his patients was a young lady who was brought to him in a wheelchair when he was staying in the city of Bangor, Maine. Other patients were waiting for Quimby, but he turned from them

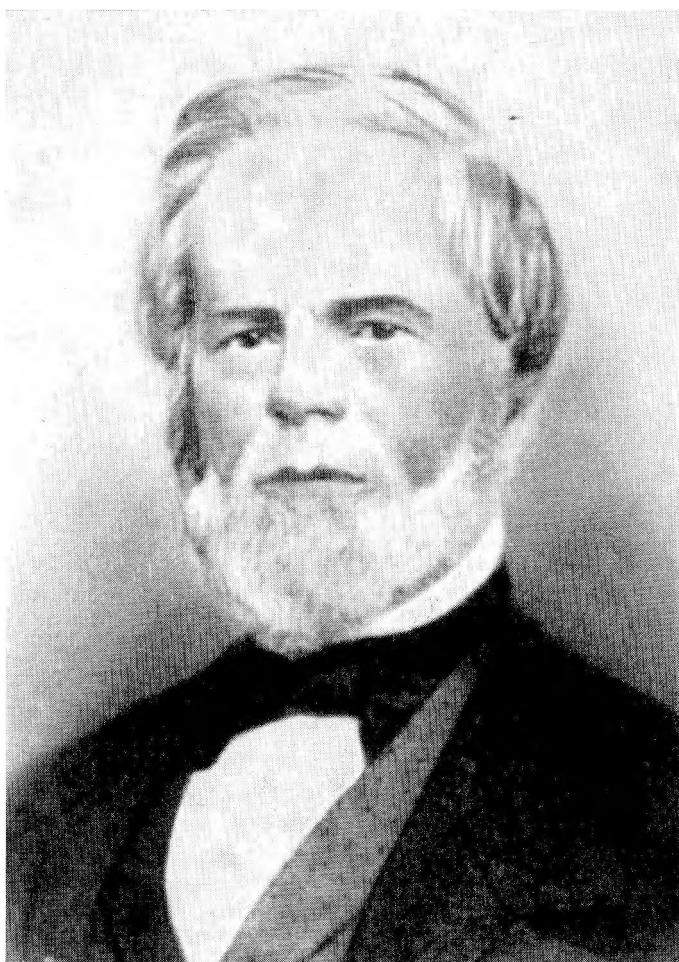
to the lady in the wheelchair and, addressing her sternly, said loudly, "Get out of that cart; git up and walk". The girl's father near by turned to Quimby and said, "Doctor, she cannot walk, she has not put her foot on the floor for over a year". But Quimby called out again to the girl, "I said get out of that cart. Put your feet on the floor and walk, walk out of this room, and do it quick." Keeping her eyes on Quimby, the young lady began to walk, slowly, falteringly, with Quimby, commanding again, "Now walk, you can walk, walk out of this room." She did, finally collapsing in a hysterical state on the bed of her room. Peel notes this incident in his book (38, p. 158) and makes the acute observation that even though Quimby thought he had left mesmerism, the effectiveness of his will on the lady in the wheelchair "shows how close he remained in practice, if not in theory, to the animal magnetism described by Charles Poyen in his 1837 book". And then Peel goes on to quote Poyen as follows: "So thoroughly am I convinced in regard to the effects of will upon my patients, that if the science were called the power of will, instead of Animal Magnetism, it would convey to my mind a much clearer idea of what it really is. . . . We cannot better define it, than by calling it the influence which the will of one human being exerts, through the nervous system, upon the will and all the bodily functions of another . . . who for the time, is to a greater or less extent the mere creature of our will."

Quimby's voluminous writings, his notes, letters and miscellaneous observations made over the years as his busy practice permitted, were edited by Horatio W. Dresser and published as *The Quimby Manuscripts* (4), and reveal a mass of ideas which have interest for the theologian, the psychiatrist, the medical historian and, of course, those with a continuing interest in the history of Christian Science and the controversy regarding Quimby's basic idea in the growth of Mrs. Eddy's Church. Our interest in this survey of the growth of mesmerism in nineteenth-century America must necessarily be confined to that early and brief section of *The Quimby Manuscripts* entitled "The Mesmeric Period", for here the Quimby who derives from Anton Mesmer reveals himself quite clearly as a most effective follower of the physician who brought about one of the great revolutions in the science of human behaviour.

There are many reports of Quimby's remarkable work as a mesmerizer. In pre-Civil War America a practitioner such as Quimby found letters of recommendation from reputable citizens most valuable. One of them, from James W. Webster of Belfast, Maine, dated 18 November 1843 and addressed to the Honorable

David Sears, reads in part as follows: "The bearer, Mr. Phineas P. Quimby, visits your city for the purpose of exhibiting the astonishing mesmeric powers of his subject, Master Lucius Burkmarr. . . . Mr. Quimby is not an educated man, nor is he pretending or obtrusive; but I think if you should take occasion to converse with him you will discern many traces of deep thought and reflection, particularly upon the subject above mentioned. His boy will, I think, demonstrate in an *extraordinary* manner the phenomena of magnetic influence, more especially in the department usually termed *clairvoyance*; and should you take an opportunity to be put in communication with him, I doubt not you will be gratified with the results. Time and distance with him are annihilated, and he travels with the rapidity of thought. I think he will describe to you the appearance of any edifice, tower or temple, and even that of any person, either in Europe or America, upon which or upon whom your imagination may rest. I say this much from the fact that I have been in communication with him [mentally] myself and do know that he describes remote places and even the appearance of persons at great distances which he never before could have heard or thought of . . ." (4, p. 37).

Another letter from Belfast, Maine, 6 November 1843, addressed to Nathan Hale, Dr. Jacob Bigelow and Dr. John Ware of Boston—the signature of the writer was not available because the letter had been handled so much—vouches in detailed fashion for the amazing accuracy of the experiments performed by Quimby and Lucius Burkmarr. He, the writer, was astonished at Lucius's capacity to reveal facts about objects half a mile away of which he had no previous knowledge. "I have good reason to believe", continues the writer, "that he can discern the internal structure of an animal body, and if there be anything morbid or defective therein detect and explain it. The important advantage of this to surgery and medicine is obvious enough. He, that is, his intellect, can be in two places at the same time. He can go from one point to another, no matter how remote, without passing through the intermediate space. I have ascertained from irrefragable experiments that he takes ideas directly from the mind of the person in communication with him, and, second, without reference to such mind, directly from the object or thing to which his attention is directed; and in both instances without aid from his five bodily senses. He can perceive without using either of the common organs of perception. His mind when he is mesmerised seems to have no relation to body, distance, place, time or motion. He passes from Belfast to Washington, or from the



Phineas Parkhurst Quimby (1802-1866)

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earth to the moon, not as horses, steam engines or light, but swifter than light, by a single act of volition. In a word, he strides far beyond the reach of philosophy. He demonstrates, as I think, better than all physical, metaphysical or moral science, the *immateriality* of the human soul, and that its severance from the body involves not its own destruction. At least he proves this of himself. And I suppose other souls are like his. . . . Mesmerism as manifested by this boy lets in more light than any other window that has been opened for 1800 years. This may look like gross extravagance, but if you have the same luck I have you will find it is not so " (4, pp. 38-39).

Here, in part, is a letter dated February 1845 from East Machias, from a person who had listened to Quimby lecturing and watched his experiments with Lucius: "The power of perceiving the seat of the disease, and of describing the most minute symptoms which I do not *guess* but *know*, his subject possesses when in the mesmeric sleep is astonishing beyond words to express. He has examined my wife twice and . . . I venture to say that all have been perfectly satisfied that there is not the least deception in regard to the matter, but the most satisfactory proof of an extraordinary, I may almost say miraculous, insight. . . . Lucius [sees] every particular in regard to the internal structure and state of the body, especially describing the causes of disease. . . . I write this without the knowledge or suggestion of Mr. Quimby, but hoping that hereby some who may receive inestimable benefit may not lose this opportunity. . . . Mr. Johnson has been put in communication with Lucius in public, and Mrs. Johnson this morning at our home, and he described with astonishing accuracy precisely the object which she had in her mind, which Mr. Quimby calls thought-reading, and which I am just as certain is real as that I am *here* and the sun shines to-day, and also things which she did not have in her mind in regard to the persons and places which she took him to visit in spirit. This if true, as has often happened to Mr. Quimby, will place the power of clairvoyance beyond the shadow of a doubt. [Lucius] has it beyond the shadow of a doubt as far as perceiving disease and every internal organ of the body is concerned . . . and we shall write immediately to discover [the facts of the things discovered through] clairvoyance" (4, pp. 39-40).

Quimby's first experiment in a community other than his native Belfast was an event of some consequence and was reported as follows in an April 1843 issue of the *Bangor Democrat*:

"Mr. Quimby of Belfast has visited here by invitation, and made

exhibitions in public for the first time out of his native town. Some of our citizens are well acquainted with him, and others are acquainted with citizens of Belfast who have the most entire confidence in him: it is therefore preposterous that he attempts to practise imposition.

"He has with him two young men, brothers, one 23 and the other 17. They are clairvoyant subjects. The first evening the experiments were not successful, but one made in private we will relate as a sample of the rest. The young man was magnetised by Mr. Quimby, when one of our citizens was put in communication with him. In *imagination* he took the boy to St. John, New Brunswick, before the new Custom House, and asking him what he could see, he said a building with a stone front and the rest of it in brick. He then began to read the letters on it. 'C-u-s-t-o-m. Oh, this is the Custom House.' He then took him inside the building and asked what he could see there, when he described the stone steps leading into the second story, the iron railing, curiously formed, and when taken into one of the rooms, described a man employed in writing.

"The gentleman says no one knew where he proposed to take the boy: the boy had never seen the building, and yet he described it as accurately as anyone who has seen it. This gentleman's word is not to be questioned by any one.

"Such was the experiment, and others can tell as well as I whether it was humbuggery, witchcraft, a juggler's trick, magic, or the mysterious power that one person exerts over another. Real or unreal, it is extraordinary" (4, p. 40).

The continued testimonials to Quimby's skills and honesty are frequent in the newspapers of Maine during that period. The *Waldo Signal* of Belfast, 25 January 1844, notes that when Quimby had lectured on animal magnetism in the town of Norridgewock on 18 February, a committee of reputable citizens of that community had observed his experiments. They found Quimby a man of integrity, devoid of deceptive practices, and completely willing to be scrutinized by the committee. Even more impressive is this letter to Quimby from Eastport, Maine, 3 May 1845, concerning a clairvoyant experiment he had conducted there: "The lady you mesmerised at my house on Saturday last and then requested her to take you to her father's house, a distance of about four hundred miles, you recollect, gave a minute description of the family and what they were about at that time. You also remember, I presume, that she stated that Mr. G., a member of the family died on the 14th ult., and that a Mrs. B., a particular friend of hers, had been there

on a visit, was taken sick there, but had so far recovered that her brother had carried her home.

"On the Tuesday following her making the above statement she received a letter from her father in which he wrote that Mr. G. died about 8 o'clock, A.M. on the 14th of April, also stating that Mrs. B. had been there on a visit, and that she was taken sick so as to be obliged to stay a week longer than she intended, and that she had got so well that her brother had carried her home.

"You are aware that I have been sceptical about most of your mesmeric experiments. I therefore feel bound to give you the above statement of *facts*, and am willing you should show this to your friends. But I am not willing to have my name appear in print" (4, p. 41).

Lucius, it must be noted here, had powers subordinate to Quimby's. He seemed to be essential to Quimby only in Quimby's mesmeric period. Lucius could, as Horatio Dresser points out in *The Quimby Manuscripts*, make "wonderfully accurate descriptions of things, events, states and conditions", and he could read the thoughts in people's minds. But he was incapable of interpreting their real meaning. And, continues Dresser, "this remained for Quimby himself to discern when, having found the limitations under which Lucius made these descriptions, he saw the difference between mere symptoms and inner causes. Lucius might describe the actual state of an untenanted body, and throw a little light on the feelings its owner may have had just before he left the flesh; but he could not tell the whole story. His descriptions raised as many problems as they appeared to solve. His clairvoyance was remarkable. But it was the perception of an inferior mind in a passive condition. What was needed was intuition, showing the real state of the individual behind all these symptoms" (4, pp. 42-43).

Dresser then goes on to quote from a remarkable journal Lucius kept, in which he speaks of Quimby and his experiments with Quimby. In this journal Lucius uses the term "magnetism" without indicating an interest in the true nature of that force. He knows that his Mr. Quimby has some kind of power over him, but he is not overly concerned about it. He is pleased when public demonstrations are successful and when doubters in the audience are no longer doubtful. But he does not pursue the mysteries of the power that has overcome this skepticism. Dresser remarks that Lucius had "exceptional receptive powers", but was "almost entirely lacking in analytical power". As for this skepticism, Lucius writes in his journal in his naive fashion: "As a general thing we didn't find the

people so bitter upon the subject of animal magnetism as we thought we should. We generally had the most influential men of the place on our side of the question, and as a general thing satisfied all sceptics beyond a doubt " (4, pp. 43-44).

Lucius, to repeat, could describe, could see, often a great distance, under Quimby's influence, with great accuracy, but he knew nothing of inner causes or the state of the human mind. Despite his innocence, he reveals in his journal that he knew Quimby was quite concerned with mind, and he notes that in one lecture Quimby "spoke of mind, and how the mind was acted upon while in a mesmeric state". Even more significant is Lucius's observation that in that lecture Quimby "clearly demonstrated that there was no fluid, and he showed the relationship between mind and matter".

This is a most important observation, for it reveals Quimby's future course. He will soon be leaving his mesmeric period. For he has now seen that it is not an invisible fluid that helps effect cures, as the older mesmerists believed, as Dresser puts it, "but of mental influences which no mesmeric theory could account for" (4, p. 45).

At this stage in his career Quimby became interested in the idea a patient accepted when suffering from disease, and his response to that idea. He began to feel that the idea was a greater force than the magnetic force. He noted that Lucius responded not only to what he perceived but also to the very idea he *thought* he perceived. Proceeding from this discovery, Quimby decided to experiment with Lucius himself. It was at this time he broke him of the habit of sucking lemons, alluded to earlier in this section. Lucius liked lemons, says Quimby, and he was determined to break him of the habit. "So when I had him asleep," he continues, "I would create mentally a lemon and he would see it. Then I would make him eat it till he would be so sick that he would vomit. Then he would beg me not to make him eat any more lemons. I never mentioned the conversation to him in the waking state. After trying the experiment two or three times, it destroyed his taste for lemons, and he had no desire for them and could not even bear the taste of them."

From this experiment came Quimby's discovery that "ideas that cannot be seen are as real as those which can be seen . . .". Here is the source of great power for good, here is simple suggestion, without the aid of a subject (4, p. 46).

These discoveries prompted Quimby to write in a Portland newspaper in February 1862: "I was one of the first mesmerisers in the state [Maine] who gave public experiments, and I had a subject who was considered the best then known. He examined and pre-

scribed for diseases. . . . The capacity of thought-reading is the common extent of mesmerism. Clairvoyance is very rare. . . .

“ When I mesmerised my subject, he would prescribe some little simple herb that would do no harm or good of itself. In some cases this would cure the patient. I also found that any medicine would cure if he ordered it. This led me to investigate the matter, and arrive at the stand I now take: that the cure is not in the medicine, but in the confidence of the doctor or medium. A clairvoyant never reasons nor alters his opinion; but, if in the first state of thought-reading he prescribes medicine, he must be posted by some mind interested in it, and must also derive his knowledge from the same source from which the doctors derive theirs.

“ The subject I had left me, and was employed by —, who employed him in examining diseases in the mesmeric sleep, and taught him to recommend such medicines as he got up himself in Latin; and, as the boy did not know Latin, it looked very mysterious. Soon afterwards he was at home again, and I put him to sleep to examine a lady, expecting that he would go on in his old way; but instead of that he wrote a long prescription in Latin. I awoke him, that he might read it; but he could not. So I took it to the apothecary who said he had the articles, and they would cost twenty dollars. This was impossible for the lady to pay. So I returned and put him to sleep again; and he gave me his usual prescription of some little herb, and [the patient] got well ” (4, pp. 47-48).

These experiments convinced Quimby that the true force was suggestion. Doctors actually created diseases by their form of suggestion; and mediums, mesmerists and magnetizers diagnosed and cured by their particular form of suggestion. But he, Quimby, too, says Dresser, discovered he was a clairvoyant also and “ without the aid of mesmerism, and without any of the psychical manifestations through which the spiritists influenced people ” (4, p. 48).

Horatio W. Dresser probably made the most valid judgment of Quimby many years ago, when he wrote in *The Quimby Manuscripts*: “ Quimby’s mind was of the type that leads to science as opposed to mere belief. He had come in contact with facts at last, and learned how the human mind works under the influence of suggestion. . . . To the end of his life, so far as his notes and manuscripts can tell us, he remained sceptical concerning spiritistic phenomena, and confined himself to a study of the experiences taking place within the human personality in this world. . . . What was the prime result of his investigations? That the human mind is amenable to suggestion, as we now say; that there are subjects

capable of being put into a state which we now call hypnosis; and that the alleged magnetic, electrical or mesmeric effects are not mysterious at all, but *are the results of the action of mind on mind*. . . . The supposed wonders of the clairvoyant state are capital instances of the activity of an *intuition* which we all possess. There is no such process as 'mesmerism', therefore. There is no 'magnetic healing'. . . . All healing said to take place by mesmeric, spiritistic or magnetic influences occurs according to *one principle*: the only principle of healing in every instance whatever, natural or Divine, according to resident energies and unchanging laws. There could be no mesmeric or magnetic science of healing, any more than there exists a medical science: the one true science is spiritual" (4, pp. 57-59).

Thus did Quimby leave mesmerism and magnetism. He was to go on healing, but he was to do it with a new science, a science that was anathema to physicians, the same physicians he now regarded as deceivers and whom he was determined to expose. "There is a wisdom," he said, "that has never been reduced to language. The science of curing disease has never been described by language, but the error that makes disease is in the mouth of every child. The remedies are also described but the remedies are worse than the disease, for instead of lessening the evil, they have increased it. In fact the theory of correcting disease is the introduction of life" (4, p. 62).

This was the remarkable figure who might have been forgotten along with the other mesmerists of the nineteenth century if it had not been for his most famous patient, who became one of his greatest admirers for a period, was awed by his powers, and then went on to found the Christian Science Church.

Although Quimby's fame derives of course from Mrs. Eddy's greater fame and the rise and undiminished growth and prosperity of her Church throughout the world, the student of mesmerism, rather than the layman, is now beginning to see his work as pioneering in the mental-healing movement in America which is so much a part of the mesmeric movement. Indeed, Frank Podmore says that "Quimby is . . . the founder of the whole modern movement of Mental-healing which in America has attained to such enormous proportions. . . . The Mind-curers . . . are the direct descendants of the Mesmerists, and in their speculative views we get in touch through the Animal Magnetists with the older mystics. . . ." However, whereas Quimby "appealed exclusively to the understanding of his patients", the modern mesmerist "acts on the

patient's imagination" (6, pp. 256-257). Podmore also suggests that mental-healers actually heal even if sound figures to prove such cures are not available. He alludes to the work and observations of Dr. H. Goddard of Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, a reputable scholar who found evidence of apparent cures effected by mental-healing methods in a Mental Science Home. The failures reported included cases of cancer, locomotor ataxy, Bright's disease, insanity, and melancholia. "Dr. Goddard's general conclusion," continues Podmore, "is that Faith-Healing and Mental Science are effective in cases where Hypnotism would be effective, and fail where Hypnotism also fails. In other words, in all alike the effect produced would appear to be due to Suggestion . . ." (6, pp. 260-261).

Quimby, then, introduced suggestion—or magnetism or mesmerism—into the healing arts in America in emphatic fashion. Some clergymen were to employ the methods of the astonishing Maine clockmaker, as did the traveling medicine men familiar to the America of the late nineteenth century. But more impressive, as will be noted later, was the use of mesmeric methods by imaginative and daring doctors of medicine.

The one clergyman who must be noted in studying healing by mesmerism in America after Quimby is the Methodist minister who was first a patient, then a follower, and finally the founder of a healing faith and healing home of his own. This was the Reverend Warren Felt Evans (1817-1889), who was born in Vermont, attended Middlebury College in that State and Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, the same state in which he was in 1844 admitted to the Conference of the Methodist Church. But twenty years later, after serving several Methodist churches, he withdrew to join the Swedenborgians, a significant development in the life of a man who was to visit Dr. Quimby at the same time for a nervous disorder. He thereafter became a Quimby enthusiast and began practising "mental medicine" in Claremont, New Hampshire. Beginning in 1869, he began writing a series of books which combined the mesmeric idea, as derived from Quimby, traces of Swedenborgianism, methods similar to those advocated by Mary Baker Eddy, and an approach to mesmerism that might be described as his own. His volumes include *The Mental Cure, illustrating the Influence of the Mind on the Body, both in Health and Disease, and the Psychological Method of Treatment* (Boston, 1869); *Mental Medicine: A Theoretical and Practical Treatise on Medical Psychology* (Boston, 1872); and *Soul and Body; or, the Spiritual Science of Health and Disease* (Boston, 1876). A strong

believer in suggestion and psychical factors in healing, he wrote, "Disease is not so much a mere physical derangement . . . as it is an abnormal mental condition . . . a wrong belief, a falsity. . . . If by any therapeutic device you remove the morbid idea . . . you cure the malady" (cf. 26, vol. V, pp. 213-214).

Applying these ideas in practical fashion, he founded the Evans Home, a hospital employing mental medicine, at Salisbury, Massachusetts, in 1870. He had a large following, and in 1909, when Frank Podmore's *Mesmerism and Christian Science* was published, that volume noted that Evans was still a considerable force in the New Thought movement (6, p. 256).

It was inevitable that *bona fide* medical men would now apply mesmeric methods in their practice, and on a scale hitherto unknown in America. One of these was Dr. James R. Cocke of Boston (1863-1900), a blind physician, a man of apparently considerable accomplishments, a novelist, author of *Blind Leaders of Blind* (Boston, 1896), and, above all, a believer in the efficacy of the hypnotic method in treating disease.¹

A devotee of hypnotism, as just noted, Cocke sometimes submitted to experiments by a professional magnetizer. On one occasion the magnetizer told him to close his eyes and not to open them, but Cocke went ahead and did open his eyes. The magnetizer then asked him a second time to close his eyes, after which he passed his hand lightly over Cocke's eyes, face and forehead. Cocke later described the incident and spoke of a tingling he felt in his eyes and forehead. "A sensation akin to fear came over me," he continued. "The operator said: 'You are going to sleep, you are getting sleepy. You cannot open your eyes.' The motor apparatus of my lids would not seemingly respond to my will, yet I was conscious that while one part of my mind wanted to open my eyes, another part did not want to, so I was in a paradoxical state. I believed I could open my eyes, and yet could not. The feeling of not wishing to open my eyes was not based on any desire to please the operator. I had no personal interest in him anyway, but . . . I firmly believed in his power to control me. He continued to suggest to me that I was going to sleep, and the suggestion of terror previously mentioned continued to increase."

The operator continued to experiment with Cocke, ordering him to execute various movements with parts of his body, all of

¹ For Cocke's close association with the development of the mediumship of the famous American medium Mrs. L. E. Piper see *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, 1892, viii, pp. 46-54.

which Cocke carried out obediently. At one point the magnetizer pricked Cocke's arm with a pin and Cocke felt considerable pain, but when told he had not felt any pain, he, Cocke, agreed there had been no pain. He was in great terror, and when he described it later, he wrote: "I was not conscious of my body at all, but I was painfully conscious of two contradictory elements within me. I knew that my body existed, but could not prove it to myself. I knew that the statements made by the operator were in a measure untrue. I obeyed them voluntarily and involuntarily" (30, p. 96).

Cocke was blind, it must be remembered. Nevertheless, the magnetizer was able to put him into a hypnotic trance by telling him to fix the number 26 in his mind and then hold up his hand. The success of this experiment seemed to terrorize Cocke further, but he was also fascinated by its possibilities, for he went home and found that he, Cocke, could hypnotize himself by going through the same motions, that is, by holding up his hand and by fixing his mind on the number 26 at his own command, just as previously he had done so at the magnetizer's order. Cocke puts it quite dramatically in his own words: "In my room that evening . . . I kept the number 26 in my mind. In a few minutes I felt the sensation of terror, but in a different way. I was intensely cold. My heart seemed to stand still. I had ringing in my ears. My hair seemed to rise up on my scalp. I persisted in my effort, and the previously mentioned noise in my ears grew louder and louder. The roar became deafening. It crackled like a mighty fire. I was fearfully conscious of myself. Having read vivid accounts of dreams, visions, etc., it occurred to me that I would experience them. I felt in a vague way that there were beings all about me but could not hear their voices. I felt as though every muscle in my body was fixed and rigid. The roar in my ears grew louder still, and I heard, above the roar, reports which sounded like artillery and musketry. Then above the din of the noise a musical chord. I knew nothing else. The world existed for me only in the tones of a mighty chord. Then I had a sensation as though I were expanding. The sound in my ears died away, and yet I was not conscious of the silence. Then all consciousness was lost. The next thing I experienced was a sensation of intense cold and of someone roughly shaking me. Then I heard the voice of my jolly landlord calling me by name." The landlord said it took ten minutes to awaken Cocke, who was "as white as a ghost and as limp as a rag" and seemed dead. Looking back later at what had occurred, Cocke said his state had been brought on in part by what he called his "vivid imagination and strained attention" (op. cit, p. 96).

The author of the book in which Cocke's remarkable experiments are reported makes a comment on Cocke's self-hypnosis which has considerable force even now, ten decades later. "The extraordinary heightening of the sense perception has an important bearing on the question of spiritualism and clairvoyance. If the powers of the mind are so enormously increased, all that is required of every sensitive easily hypnotized person is to hypnotize himself or herself, when he will be able to read thoughts and remember or perceive facts hidden to ordinary perception" (op. cit., p. 104). Later in this same work this author remarks that if self-hypnotism is possible, then it destroys the claim of the professional hypnotizers and magnetic healers that they have a peculiar power which they can exercise over their fellows. "Hypnotism is an established fact," he continues. "but the claim that the hypnotizer has any mysterious psychic power is the invariable mark of a charlatan. Probably no scientific phenomenon was ever so grossly prostituted to base ends as that of hypnotism" (op. cit., p. 106).

Cocke found hypnosis a useful therapy in the treatment of the widest variety of diseases, including typhoid fever, alcoholic pneumonia with violent delirium, locomotor ataxy, ordinary alcoholism, insanity, overwork, hysteria, headache, vertigo, and nausea. He found that hypnosis often brought about remarkable cures and significant amelioration, but he also confessed complete failure in several cases. Writing in the *Arena* magazine (31) in 1893, he remarked that hypnosis can be used without injury to patients and that it can take the place of narcotics in treatment of many diseases. He then went on to cite many impressive cases "from my private and hospital practice".

Cocke also delivered some warnings regarding hypnosis which have validity to this day. He was concerned then—as the most reputable physicians employing hypnosis today are concerned—about those who become overenthusiastic about the effectiveness of hypnosis and to the exclusion of other therapies. There is the danger, he lamented, "that certain individuals will become so enamored with its charms that other equally valuable means of cure will be ignored. Mental therapeutics has come to stay. It is yet in its infancy, and will grow, but if it were possible to kill it, it would be strangled by the fanaticism and prejudices of its devotees. The whole field is fascinating and alluring. It promises so much that it is in danger of being misused by the ignorant to such an extent that great harm may result. This is true, not only of mental therapeutics and hypnotism, but of every other blessing we possess. Hypnotism has

nothing to fear from the senseless skepticism and contempt of those who have no knowledge of the subject" (30, p. 132).

As for the professional stage hypnotizers (still a familiar American phenomenon, particularly on the television screen) Cocke made this pronouncement: "The dangers of public exhibitions, made ludicrous as they are by the operators, should be condemned by all intelligent men and women, not from the danger of hypnotism itself so much as from the liability of the performers to disturb the mental poise of that large mass of ill-balanced individuals which makes up no inconsiderable part of society. . . . Hypnotism is dangerous only when it is misused, or when it is applied to that large class of persons who are inherently unsound: especially if that mysterious thing we call credulity predominates to a very great extent over reason and other faculties of the mind."

Cocke's experiments—and it must be emphasized he was a probing experimenter and researcher as well as a conscientious physician—sometimes made important contributions to a better understanding of the clairvoyant faculty. He once treated a girl suffering from hysterical tremor. He hypnotized her and, in the words of the writer who described the incident, "stumbled on an example of thought-transference". For the girl complained of a taste of spice in her mouth, and since Cocke had been chewing spice at the time, he guessed this might be an illustration of telepathy. He said nothing then, but the next time he hypnotized the girl, he put a quinine tablet in his mouth. The girl complained immediately of a bitter taste in her mouth and asked for a glass of water, which was given her. Cocke then went behind a screen, put cayenne pepper in his mouth, and burned himself severely while doing so. The hypnotized girl then began to cry hysterically and had to be awakened. She felt no more burning in her mouth when she emerged from hypnosis, but Cocke continued to suffer the effects of the pepper. Cocke is said to have performed ninety-three such experiments with sixty-three different subjects, and with sixty-nine completely successful. The others were inconclusive or obvious failures.

Cocke speaks as follows of another experiment in which telepathy and thought-transference must be considered: "I told the subject to remain perfectly still for five minutes and to relate to me at the end of this time any sensation he might experience. I passed into another room and closed the door and locked it; went into a closet in the room and closed the door after me; took down from the shelf, first a linen sheet, then a pasteboard box, then a toy engine, owned by

a child in the house. I went back to my subject and asked him what experience he had had. He said I seemed to go into another room and from thence into a dark closet. I wanted something off the shelf, but did not know what. I took down from the shelf a piece of smooth cloth, a long square pasteboard box and a toy engine. These were all the sensations he had experienced. I asked him if he saw the articles with his eyes. . . . He answered that the closet was dark, and that he only felt them with his hands. I asked him how he knew that the engine was tin. He said, 'By the sound of it'. As my hands touched it, I heard the wheels rattle. Now the only sound made by me while in the closet was simply the rattling of the wheels of the toy as I took it off the shelf. This could not possibly have been heard, as the subject was distant from me. . . . Neither could the subject have judged where I went, as I had on light slippers which made no noise. The subject had never visited the house before, and naturally did not know the contents of the closet as he was carefully observed from the moment he entered the house." The writer of the volume in which these quotations from Cocke appear adds to this observation: "Many similar experiments are on record. Persons in the hypnoid condition have been able to tell what other persons were doing in distant parts of the city; could tell the pages of books they might be reading and the numbers of all sorts of articles."

Dr. Cocke is a most impressive figure in the history of mesmerism in America. He is one of the more important physicians who saw that medicine must somehow utilize mesmerism as a therapy, just as Dr. Charles Caldwell of Louisville, Kentucky, during the first half of the century discerned that his profession, medicine, must realize its great potential. However, Cocke has more particular interest to the student of the paranormal, for mesmerism stimulated his interest in thought-transference, in clairvoyance, and in the psychic factor in human behavior. This is a remarkable development, and it marks one of the earliest of the scientific attempts to understand the psychic forces at work in the mesmerized state.

THE LATER YEARS

Although the scientific impulse toward a study of hypnosis gained momentum as the century drew to a close, the theatricality associated with hypnosis continued—as, indeed, it still does—to have the greater popular appeal. The very volume in which Dr. Cocke's work is outlined (30) speaks at some length of the public demonstra-

tions of hypnosis. The title and subtitle of the volume are in themselves revealing: *Complete Hypnotism, Mesmerism, Mind reading, and Spiritualism. How to hypnotize; being an exhaustive and practical system of method, application, and use.* Chapter II of this volume is concerned with "Amusing Experiments". One experiment was performed by a Dr. Herbert L. Flint, whose doctorate is not further identified, but who is called a very successful operator by a New York lawyer who describes some of Flint's demonstrations. At one such demonstration, apparently staged in a public auditorium, Flint called for volunteers, and twenty young and middle-aged men ascended the stage. All seemed to be middle-class people, rather than laborers. The group sat in a semicircle facing the audience. Dr. Flint then went to each of the men, stroked the forehead and head of each man, saying repeatedly, "Close your eyes. Think of nothing but sleep. You are very tired. You are drowsy. You feel very sleepy." Some of the volunteers fell asleep at once. One or two stayed awake and seemed to resist giving in. After Flint had completed his tour of all the volunteers, some were nodding, some were sound asleep. The few who were awake and smiling were dismissed as "unlikely subjects" and left the stage. Flint then approached those remaining on the stage, that is, those effectively under hypnosis, snapped his fingers and awakened each. One man who was awakened was asked what had happened and replied that something in his head had responded. The author of the volume comments, "This is to be doubted. . . . As a rule, subjects in this stage of hypnosis do not feel any sensation they can remember, and do not become self-conscious".

The group was now wide awake and looked normal in every way. Flint then went to each of the men again, "subjecting each to a separate physical test, such as sealing eyes, stiffening the arms, fingers, legs, producing partial catalepsy and causing stuttering and inability to speak. In those possessing strong imaginations, he was able to produce hallucinations, such as feeling mosquito bites, toothache, finding pockets filled, and the hands covered with molasses, etc." Flint now asked each of the men to clasp his hands in front, and when all did, commanded, "Think your hands so fast that you can't pull them apart. Try. You can't." All the volunteers tried frantically, but without success. Flint explained this by noting that each of the men had obeyed a counter-suggestion and were really forcing their hands closer together. He released them from the hypnotic spell by merely snapping his fingers. Those who witnessed this demonstration remarked that it was astonishing

that as each man emerged from the hypnotic state, he seemed fully aware of the ridiculous position in which his comrades had been placed and that all seemed to enjoy the confusion that resulted. But on command from Flint they could be made to continue acting in a ridiculous manner. They were not "free agents" when under hypnotic control. One chap, for example, aged about eighteen, an habitual cigarette smoker, was told under suggestion (or hypnosis) that he would not be able to smoke for twenty-four hours. After the demonstration this young man was asked to smoke, but he answered that "the very idea was repugnant". Even when induced to place a cigarette in his mouth, it sickened him and he threw it away in disgust. Flint's daughter also took the class at this demonstration. She pointed a finger at one man, whereupon the man began to look intently in front of himself, much to the amusement of the rest of the class. The man in the meantime projected his head in front of him, took on a glassy stare, with the pupils of his eyes dilated, and then he arose from his chair, and in a peculiar "steady, gliding gait", walked toward the lady, Flint's daughter, until his nose and her hand touched, at which point he stopped. Miss Flint then took him to the front of the stage, leaving him there standing in a deep sleep. The class was amused, but the lady ended the laughter of some of them by commanding them to come on the stage in a sleep state, which they did. After this Miss Flint commanded each man to go into the audience, telling one to imagine himself a newsboy selling papers, another that he was a hunter going into the woods to shoot birds, crawling like a hunter, and so on. All obeyed and behaved as commanded. One man is said to have offered the newsboy impersonator one cent for a two-cent newspaper, and the hypnotized man asked if the would-be purchaser "didn't want the earth" (30, Ch. 2).

After this demonstration Miss Flint had the men return to the semicircle formation on the stage. She asked one man to rise, showed him a riding whip, but told him it was a hot bar of iron. The man was indifferent and unimpressed. Miss Flint now repeated the suggestion, and the man's indifferent look changed to one of incredulity. The other men responded in the same manner (and Dr. Flint explained that his daughter was hypnotising these others through the one man she had singled out originally). Miss Flint then touched her original subject lightly with the end of the whip, and he shrieked with pain as if that whip were a red-hot iron. She touched each member of the class in the semicircle, and each howled, also in pain. Some of the men even tore off their clothes

in an effort to seek relief. A physician examined one of the men and reported he found a long red mark across his shoulder as if he had been burned by a hot iron. The physician further reported that had the suggestion of burning iron continued, a true blister would have resulted.

Other experiments included giving a shy young man a broom wrapped in a sheet, telling him it was his sweetheart, and commanding him to make love to her. He did just that, making love to the broom-sweetheart, kissing, caressing, and hugging and utterly oblivious of the guffaws of the audience. Another man was told that a man in the audience had his head on fire, whereupon the hypnotized subject ran into the audience in an effort to put out that reported fire. Still another man was ordered to become a side-show barker, and he acted the part perfectly, with all the patter of an experienced performer.

It is understandable that in the midst of such demonstrations all over America there should be a demand for instruction in hypnotism. One of the volumes in which such instructions appeared was *Somnambulism* by Arthur L. Webb, published in 1899 in Chicago. But it was different from other volumes of instruction in the mesmeric art, for it rejected the claim that the hypnotist had supernatural powers and, moreover, it contained a critical review by Sydney L. Flower, LL.D., described as the Editor of *Suggestive Therapeutics*, who proclaimed the power and reality of hypnosis in words that might well come from a reputable modern practitioner of the science and art. But first it will be instructive to quote Arthur Webb, the author of the volume. "My sole object in writing this treatise", he begins, "will be to teach people how to hypnotize. . . . I am what physicians might call a layman, in the sense that I do not practice the art of healing by the aid of hypnotism as a manner of securing a livelihood. Yet I am not a layman, if practical knowledge of the subject, derived from much and long experience, can teach one to be an expert. . . . I mean to address myself to beginners. . . . I have tried to hypnotize fifty-eight persons and have failed of success in only two instances . . ." (32, p. 5).

He then goes on and gives the reader a variety of simple instructions for hypnotizing another person. He remarks that complete confidence in the hypnotizer is absolutely essential. He, the hypnotizer, must get a willing subject and impress upon him that in the hypnotic state, he, the subject, can be made to behave in a specified manner after he has become drowsy, closed his eyes, and fallen asleep at the command of the hypnotizer (op. cit., p. 7).

After citing his many successes, the author and instructor remarks, "I was cruel enough once to make a youth, without waking him, walk into a lake of water to the depth of his throat. I waited for my own benefit to see if it would wake him; so I told him it would not. I did, however, tell him that the water was a cornfield and that he would go into it and gather some corn. It was at night and I made the experiment in opposition to the wishes of some ladies who were present. The weather was warm and I knew no harm could result. At the suggestion, the subject at once walked out into the water without the slightest hesitation, and did not stop until I told him. I do not know whether or not he would have gone beyond his depth, for I would make no such experiment, and I advise all who read this to make none such. It is always criminal to trifle with human life, even if crime may not result from the trifling" (op. cit., p. 31).

This theatrically minded man nevertheless surprises the modern reader by his hardheaded attitude toward those who would call hypnosis and the hypnotist products of the supernatural. "I must . . . take issue with those who claim the hypnotist is a person of supernatural power, and who for the art of hypnotism claim supernatural possibilities. Anyone who will practice with patience the rules here laid down can successfully hypnotize." He warns the prospective hypnotizer not to expect to hypnotize a person against that person's will even though he, Webb, succeeded in mesmerizing a person against his will fifteen or twenty times and despite both physical and mental resistance. But such cases, he insists, are rare. He then concludes as follows: "Hypnotism is not something unreal: it is not something new. It is only a mental phenomenon, long discovered, though not yet understood, being now put to practical use. In the hands of physicians the good to mankind of this force, this phenomenon, this mental condition (or whatever it may be called) is inestimable. . . . I sincerely believe that it should be used for the benefit of humanity and not merely to gratify the curiosity of the operator and for the amusement of his friends . . ." (op. cit., p. 33).

As for thought-transference and such phenomena, he gives this opinion: "You may have a person hypnotized ever so thoroughly and that person cannot read your mind nor the mind of anyone else; nor can the person hypnotized foretell events, nor tell what is happening in another part of this or any other country, though spiritualists and charlatans think otherwise" (op. cit., p. 32).

Sydney Flower, the editor of *Suggestive Therapeutics*, whose review

appears with the book, is even more emphatic. "There is no mystery, there is no electrical-biological fluid; there is no magnetism," he says in his praise of Webb's clear, simple instructions. He also adds that Webb's method "will of course be recognized as identical with the verbal suggestion of the Nancy school". He disagrees, nevertheless, with some of Webb's ideas, and notes, "A liar will lie, and a thief will steal, as clearly in the hypnotic as in the waking condition. Hypnosis has nothing to do with the matter. . . . It is not possible to make a somnambulist sign notes or transact any responsible business which is prejudicial to his interests" (op. cit., pp. 35 ff.).

Flower expressed his abhorrence of the "induction of hypnosis for purposes of amusement by the public exhibition of somnambulist feats. . . . These entertainments are essentially vulgar. . . . There is a higher side to hypnotism which will never be admitted to full recognition as long as the charlatan is empowered to drag its name in the dirt. It is an agent for good; it is never, in skilful hands, an agency for evil. Its value to the physician and to the psychologist cannot be estimated. It affords a means by which the power of the mind to heal the body may be manifested. Whether it be called Christian Science, faith-healing, mental healing, osteopathy, massage, bone-setting, or suggestive therapeutics, the fact remains that the power itself is the power of the person cured to heal himself. Who shall name this power? Let it be the divine spirit, the soul, the subconscious—anything you will—it is these. I believe that hypnotism, rightly applied, is the most successful, because it can be the most universal method of calling this power into action! Yet I know, and see as clearly as I see the daylight, that hypnotism is only a means to an end. The time is coming . . . when men's lives will be something more than a reflection of the suggestion of other men" (op. cit., pp. 43-45).

By the closing years of the nineteenth century mesmerism had achieved a great evolution in the United States. To be sure, the mesmerizers, or magnetizers, still roamed the country. There were still public demonstrations of the effectiveness of mesmerism. Strange prophets and leaders of new cults championed the cause of mesmerism. And yet the practice now attracted men of greater substance. Dr. James Cocke, as we have noted, was a physician who practised the art and also submitted to it so that he could better understand it. He made no grandiose claims for mesmerism, but he is the first physician to experiment extensively with it in his daily practice. He derives from Phineas Quimby, who may have

been a more original mind, but Cocke had more formal training in physiology, anatomy and the other sciences, and he was better able to study the effects of mesmerism with an accuracy that could be followed by other physicians and scientists.

Cocke also was one of the first physicians to suggest the possibility of a psychic factor in mesmerism. He was no narrow-minded medical man, and long before the days of psychosomatic medicine he knew that there are intangibles in healing and in treating disease that lie outside the limits of orthodox science.

The men who followed Cocke and the study of hypnosis in America and contributed so much to its inevitable maturity were, significantly, men who had themselves been trained in medicine or psychology and psychopathology in American universities: Aldred Scott Warthin, Morton Prince, Boris Sidis, and William James.

Warthin, born in Indiana in 1866, had a distinguished career as physician, naturalist, and musician in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (he died in 1931). He was a botanist, a pianist with a diploma from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, a teacher of music who went on to earn a degree in medicine at the University of Michigan, after which he won another doctorate in philosophy, taught pathology, clinical medicine, and medical history.

From 1893 to 1900 he carried on pathological studies in Freiburg and Dresden in Germany, and in Vienna. Writing in the *Medical News*, 28 July 1894 (33), he describes an experiment with music on hypnotic subjects in Vienna. The subjects were listeners at a performance of a Wagnerian opera and were in a state of self-induced hypnosis in which, says Warthin, "the subjective faculties were mightier than and superseded their objective perceptions. Music was no longer to them a succession of sounds and they so forgot the mechanical basis of it that they lived in a fairy world of dreams." This suggested the experiments in hypnosis which he thereupon carried out. He hypnotized a highly emotional subject, and then played on the piano a section from *The Ride of the Walküre*. The subject's pulse, he reported, became more rapid, increasing from sixty to one hundred and twenty beats per minute. As the music continued the subject became more tense. Respiration also increased from eighteen to thirty per minute. The subject now became greatly excited, moving his body violently, drawing up his legs, tossing his arms into the air, and perspiring profusely. When awakened the subject could recall no music, but rather remembered the great excitement of "riding furiously through the air".

Warthin also tried the same experiment on a less emotional young man who did not pass into so deep a hypnotic state but who reacted in similar fashion. This young man's pulse rate also rose from seventy to one hundred and twenty, and he also recalled a sensation of riding through the air. Warthin tried other Walküre music and noted that with the slow movement, as well as with other music, there were different and quite pronounced effects on respiration, perspiration and skin color. Warthin's report on his experiments in the respected publication, *Medical News*, did not attract great attention, but it is noted here because it is symptomatic of new stirrings in the study of mesmerism by a most orthodox and highly respected figure in American medicine. For Warthin was, it should be recalled, a nationally known pathologist and clinician, former editor of the *Annals of Clinical Medicine*, who had also served as President of the Association of American Physicians. He gave hypnosis a measure of respectability at a time when the magnetizers were still attracting wide-eyed audiences in a manner that still suggested circus barkers at sideshows and traveling medicine men without medical degrees or medical training. Surely, the final triumph of hypnosis as a therapy accepted by the conservative American Medical Association in June 1958 can be traced in some degree to the researches of such men as Aldred Warthin.¹

Another medical man and a contemporary of Warthin who went beyond medicine for a better understanding of hypnosis was Morton Prince (1854-1929). It must be noted that Prince brought to this study even more respectability than Warthin. His father came of an old Massachusetts family and had been elected mayor of Boston four times, and his mother came from an equally distinguished Philadelphia family. Morton Prince received a bachelor's degree from Harvard College in 1875, and then went on to the Harvard Medical School, where he was graduated in 1879. He became interested in abnormal psychology at an early age, and it is said this came about after he had listened to a sermon by a preacher who said that the human body was affected by spirits just as the chandelier in church, to which he, the preacher, pointed, was moved by the wind of the atmosphere.

Prince served his internship at the Boston City Hospital and then went overseas for more study at Vienna, Strasbourg and Paris. But it was undoubtedly at Nancy in France, a great center of hypnosis studies, which boasted such great pioneers in the field as Liébeault and Bernheim, that his lasting interest in hypnosis and other

¹ See Appendix.

abnormal states of consciousness was first aroused. After he returned to the United States, he was nominally a practitioner of general medicine, but his truest interests were in neurology, the nervous system, human personality and human behavior. He lectured on various aspects of these phenomena at many universities, including Harvard, Tufts, London, Oxford and Cambridge, and he wrote extensively on them in many monographs, articles in professional journals, and in several books, including *The Nature of Mind and Human Automatism* (Philadelphia, 1885), *The Dissociation of a Personality* (New York, 1906), and *The Unconscious* (New York, 1914). He founded the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* in 1906 and was the editor until his death in 1929.

Now, here was mesmerism, but how far it had come from the traveling medicine men earlier in the century and even at the close of the century, albeit in smaller numbers. And how far it had come from the days of Phineas P. Quimby, a man of great honesty and deep sensitivity, who had groped for the scientific facts, but did not have the formal training so necessary to understand the physiological and neurological facts that only a well-trained physician and psychologist could understand and must understand he could venture into a hypothesis for mesmerism.

The towering figure in American psychology and psychopathology, who saw more than therapy in hypnosis, was, of course, William James. Here was a man trained in medicine also—just as were Cocke, Warthin and Prince—but this was also America's leading philosopher and psychologist and, more important, a man unafraid to delve into the mysteries of the human psyche.

Born in 1842 in New York City, he received a Doctor of Medicine degree from Harvard in 1870, and by the time he died in 1910 in New Hampshire, he was the most famous and most daring psychologist in America, with honorary degrees from Padua, Princeton, Edinburgh, and other universities. His *Principles of Psychology* (New York, 1890), *Pragmatism* (New York, 1907) and other works remain classic studies for the most orthodox and conventional students of human behavior, including those who would rather forget that he was a keen student of hypnosis and psychical research long before there was a degree of respectability in studying such phenomena soberly. He was a friend or close professional colleague of some of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research, London, and was, as his most recent biographer, Gay Wilson Allen, puts it in his *William James* (New York 1967, p. 282) "obviously the chief instigator" of the American Society for Psychical Research.

He was President of the London group in 1896. He was deeply interested in the phenomena of hypnosis from the start, as was the British Society for Psychical Research, which stated in its initial announcement that it would investigate this, among other related phenomena. And in his Presidential address in 1896 to the London society, he said, "If I were asked to give some sort of dramatic unity to our history, I should say first that we started with high hopes that the hypnotic field would yield an important harvest, and that these hopes have subsided with the general subsidence of what may be called the hypnotic wave" (34, p. 3). But despite the subsidence of that wave—for a period only—James was to continue his great interest in it. In a lecture before the Lowell Institute in Boston, 1896, he said: "Some minds would see a marvel in the simplest hypnosis—others would refuse to admit that there was anything new even if one rose from the dead. They would either deny the apparition, or say you could find a full explanation of it in Foster's *Physiology*. . . . I myself have no question that the formula of dissociated personality will account for the phenomena I have brought before you. Hypnotism is sleep. Hysteria is obsession, not by demons, but by a fixed idea of the person that has dropped down. Janet's phrase suffices here . . . The hypnotic condition is not *in itself* clairvoyant, but is *more favorable* to the cause of clairvoyance or thought-transference than the waking state . . ." (35, pp. 68-69).

The daring James was to go beyond such pronouncements. He was to experiment with hypnosis on a famous subject, the trance medium, Mrs. Leonora Piper. In his report on mediumistic phenomena he writes as follows: "What science wants is a *context* to make the trance-phenomena continuous with other physiological and psychological facts. Curious to ascertain whether there were continuity between the medium-trance and the ordinary hypnotic trace, I made some observations *ad hoc* upon Mrs. P. My first two attempts to hypnotize her were unsuccessful. Between the second time and the third, I suggested to her 'Control' in the medium-trance that he should make her a mesmeric subject for me. He agreed. (A suggestion of this sort made by the operator in one hypnotic trance would probably have some effect on the next.) She became partially hypnotized on the third trial; but the effect was so slight that I ascribe it rather to the effect of repetition than to the suggestion made. By the fifth trial she had become a pretty good hypnotic subject, as far as muscular phenomena and automatic imitations of speech and gesture go; but I could not affect her consciousness, or otherwise get her beyond this point. Her condition

in this semi-hypnosis is very different from her medium-trance. The latter is characterized by great muscular unrest, even her ears moving vigorously in a way impossible in her waking state. But in hypnosis her muscular relaxation and weakness are extreme. She often makes several efforts to speak ere her voice becomes audible; and to get a strong contraction of the hand, for example, express manipulation and suggestion must be practised. The automatic imitations I spoke of are in the first instance very weak, and only become strong after repetition. Her pupils contract in the medium-trance. Suggestions to the 'Control' that he should make her recollect after the trance what she had been saying were accepted, but had no result. In the hypnotic-trance such a suggestion will often make the patient remember all that has happened. No sign of thought-transference—as tested by card- and diagram-guessing—has been found in her, either in the hypnotic condition just described, or immediately after it; although her 'Control' in the medium-trance has said that he would bring them about" (36, pp. 104-105).

As for the prejudices of scientific and other men toward such phenomena as hypnosis in his day—as in ours, it can be added—James found an opportunity to make some biting comments on them when he paid tribute to the memory of Frederic Myers after the latter's death. ". . . Despite the triumph of romanticism," he wrote, "psychologists as a rule have still some lingering prejudice in favour of the nobler simplicities. Moreover there are social prejudices which scientific men themselves obey. The word 'hypnotism' has been trailed about in the newspapers so that even we ourselves rather wince at it, and avoid occasions of its use. 'Mesmerism', 'clairvoyance', 'medium'.—*horrescimus referentes!*—and with all these things, infected by their previous mystery-mongering discoverers, even our best friends had rather avoid complicity . . ." (37, p. 15).

Finally, there are the penetrating remarks of James on the subliminal consciousness enunciated so memorably by his friend Frederic Myers in the monumental *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death* (14). We must recall that in *Human Personality* Myers attempted to prove by what he regarded as scientific evidence that the subliminal region of the mind, the area below normal consciousness, has an existence separate from the consciousness we know in our daily work and from the body itself, and that the subliminal continues to live after the death of the body. James had many reservations regarding many of Myers's conclusions, but he was particularly impressed with Myers's theory of the subliminal—and

Myers, it must be remembered, was a poet before he became interested in psychic research and in immortality itself. He had no training in medicine or physiology or pathology, factors which did not impress James as much as Myers's penetrating imagination. "Hypnotic phenomena," wrote James, "form the centre of perspective for Myers's map of the subliminal region. In the first place, the system of faculty of a subject under hypnosis is quite different from his waking system of faculty. While portions of the usual waking system are inhibited, other portions are sometimes supernormally energized in hypnosis, producing not only hallucinations, but after-results in the way of sense-discrimination and control of organic function, to which the waking consciousness is unable to attain. We are thus led to the notion of two different currents of mental life, one deeper, and the other shallower, of which either is best appealed to while the other is in abeyance. That these currents may not only alternate but may co-exist with each other is proved by Gurney's, Binet's and Janet's discovery of Subjects who, receiving suggestions during hypnosis and forgetting them when awakened, nevertheless then wrote them out automatically and unconsciously as soon as a pencil was placed in their hands.

"Allying the curative phenomena of hypnosis with the great reparative powers of sleep, and its enhancements of faculty with the enhancements of faculty to which dreaming and natural somnambulism occasionally give rise, Myers postulates a region of sleeping consciousness present at all times in all of us, a region moreover which in certain aspects has an advantage over the waking levels of the mind. This subliminal region is usually closed off from the ordinary waking consciousness, but under special conditions of appeal, which vary with the idiosyncrasy of the individual, it may break in with effects which reveal its presence to us. The popular word 'suggestion' is only a name for a successful appeal to this subliminal consciousness.

"The appeal, in hypnotic subjects, is made through the ordinary consciousness in the first instance; and into that consciousness the effects, when they are 'post-hypnotic', return in the form of 'automatisms', sensory or motor. In other words, hallucinations or unmotivated impulses to act, which in some cases are upheavals from the subliminal into the supraliminal region, may be so in all cases. The two regions thus form environments for each other, with possibilities of interaction. . . . So far Myers would seem to be on perfectly solid ground. There is a subliminal region of life which opens fitfully into the supraliminal region. The only doubt is as to

whether it be general in human beings, or whether it be not limited to a few hypnotic and hysteric subjects. . . . The normal consciousness is thus only a portion of our nature, adapted primarily to 'terrene' conditions. Those more directly intuitive faculties which it lacks, and of which we get glimpses in individuals whose subliminal lies exceptionally open, can hardly be vestiges, degenerations of something which our ancestors once possessed. We should rather regard them as germs of something not yet evolved for methodical use in our natural environment, but possibly even now carrying on a set of active functions in their own wider 'cosmic' environment" (39, pp. 23 ff.).

Thus does William James conclude the fascinating story of mesmerism in nineteenth-century America. He finally gave scientific authority to some of the strange and effective cures and miracles of the early magnetizers. He surely foresaw by more than half a century the report of the Commission of the American Medical Association, which concluded its study of hypnotism by remarking that "in order to begin to understand these phenomena it is necessary to place hypnosis within the general framework of psychodynamic psychology and psychiatry. . . . The use of hypnosis has a recognized place in the medical armamentarium and is a useful technique in the treatment of certain illnesses when employed by qualified medical and dental personnel . . ." (see Appendix, p. 73.).

But William James went far beyond the therapeutic value of hypnosis. He studied it as a phenomenon which might yet give a cosmic view of the human psyche and the illimitable promise it held for future psychical researchers.

APPENDIX

The following is the text of a report on hypnosis, originally prepared by the Council on Mental Health of the American Medical Association, the professional organization of physicians in the United States. The report was based on findings of a study group under the chairmanship of Dr. M. Ralph Kaufman, approved by the A.M.A.'s Board of Trustees and adopted by the Association's House of Delegates on 26 June 1958. It was made available for the guidance of physicians and dentists by publication in the Journal of the American Medical Association on 13 September.

The history of hypnosis since the time of Mesmer has been characterized by a series of curious cycles alternating between great interest and almost complete rejection. This phenomenon in itself is an indication of the somewhat mystical aura that has surrounded the subject throughout the years. Recently, owing to a concatenation of circumstances, there has been a reawakened interest in hypnosis. In part the experiences of World War II contributed to this interest.

The Council on Mental Health of the American Medical Association has for some years received numerous inquiries from physicians throughout the country relating to the subject of hypnosis, many of them asking for information regarding training programs in this area. A group of serious workers in medicine has been reporting on various aspects of the utilization of hypnosis. In addition, the dental profession has become interested in its use in relation to its own practice. Concurrently "fringe" groups have been exploiting hypnosis through the press, radio and television. Over-popularization in this as in other areas of medicine usually leads to oversimplification. Over-dramatized events are seized upon to the general detriment of sober scientific work.

A subcommittee of the British Medical Association has issued an excellent report, published in the *British Medical Journal*, April 23 1955, and with which the Council is in essential agreement.

In view of the total situation, the Council on Mental Health constituted itself as a committee of the whole to study the medical use of hypnosis. Some outstanding authorities in this field were invited to participate in several committee meetings, and, in addition,

others were requested to give their opinions through correspondence. The Council expresses its thanks and appreciation to them for their excellent collaboration in this study. It is to be emphasized that the responsibility for this report and the recommendations contained therein are those of the Council.

The work of the Hypnosis Committee was limited to the specific theme of the medical use of hypnosis in its therapeutic aspects, since this seemed to be the most relevant area for the Council's consideration.

There was unanimous agreement that there was no need at this time to question the validity of the various phenomena elicited by hypnotic techniques. Actually, in the literature of hypnosis, practically all of these phenomena have been noted in one way or another since the time of Mesmer. In spite of this, however, it is still difficult to arrive at a formulation of hypnosis that is completely satisfactory. The subcommittee of the British Medical Association presented the following definition with which there was agreement in general:

Hypnosis is "a temporary condition of altered attention in the subject which may be induced by another person and in which a variety of phenomena may appear spontaneously or in response to verbal or other stimuli. These phenomena include alterations in consciousness and memory, increased susceptibility to suggestion, and the production in the subject of responses and ideas unfamiliar to him in his usual state of mind. Further, phenomena such as anesthesia, paralysis, and the rigidity of muscles, and vaso-motor changes can be produced and removed in the hypnotic state."

The committee emphasized certain regressive aspects of hypnosis. It also stressed that fact that hypnotic phenomena were of a wide variety and should not be limited only to the so-called trance state.

In order to begin to understand these phenomena it is necessary to place hypnosis within the general framework of psychodynamic psychology and psychiatry. This has implications not only for the theoretical understanding of hypnosis but also for its therapeutic application and will therefore be related in an important way to any teaching and training program. In a sense it is unfortunate that the induction of hypnosis is generally so simple a matter that it requires little or no technical skill or training. This, in itself, represents one of the main hazards in its utilization, since it lends itself to over-simplification and over-dramatization with a production of spectacular phenomena that are meat for the charlatan. The use of hypnosis has a recognized place in the medical armamentarium

and is a useful technique in the treatment of certain illnesses when employed by qualified medical and dental personnel.

It has already been emphasized in this report that a background of psychodynamic psychology and psychiatry is essential in order to understand the phenomena of hypnosis. It is equally important to insist on the fact that the utilization of hypnotic techniques for therapeutic purposes should be restricted to those individuals who are qualified by background and training to fulfill all the necessary criteria that are required for a complete diagnosis of the illness which is to be treated. Hypnosis should be used on a highly selective basis by such individuals and should never become a single technique used under all circumstances by a therapist. No physician or dentist should utilize hypnosis for purposes that are not related to his particular specialty and that are beyond the range of his ordinary competence. As an example, a trained and qualified dentist might use hypnosis for hypnoanesthesia, hypnoanalgesia, or for the allaying of anxiety in relation to specific dental work. Under no circumstances would it be proper for him to use hypnosis for the treatment of neurotic difficulties of his patient. The surgeon, obstetrician, anesthesiologist, gynecologist, internist and general practitioner may legitimately utilize these techniques within their own particular field of competence.

A great deal has been said about the hazards of hypnosis, and this is still a controversial matter. One of the members of the conference, who is in a somewhat unique position since he has been consulted professionally by many colleagues who have utilized hypnosis and has also made a survey of results, presented material which indicated that in a number of patients there were harmful results which included the appearance of psychotic conditions and other complications. On the other hand, consultants either personally or through correspondence indicated that they were not aware of any such harm resulting from the use of hypnosis. This is an area for further research.

CONCLUSIONS

General practitioners, medical specialists, and dentists might find hypnosis valuable as a therapeutic adjunct within the specific field of their professional competence. It should be stressed that all those who use hypnosis need to be aware of the complex nature of the phenomena involved.

Teaching related to hypnosis should be under responsible medical

or dental direction, and integrated teaching programs should include not only the techniques of induction but also the indications and limitations for its use within the specific area involved. Instruction limited to induction techniques alone should be discouraged.

Certain aspects of hypnosis still remain unknown and controversial, as is true in many other areas of medicine and the psychological sciences. Therefore, active participation in high level research by members of the medical and dental professions is to be encouraged.

The use of hypnosis for entertainment purposes is vigorously condemned.

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Hypnotism in Great Britain

by

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“ Imagination in the mesmeric or sub-mesmeric state can effect prodigies. Mesmerism has thus thrown a flood of light upon mental philosophy . . . ”

—*The Zoist*, January 1856.

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1800—1900

INTRODUCTION

BEFORE dealing with the origin, development and practice of mesmerism and hypnotism in Great Britain during the nineteenth century a few words must be said about the history of the subject generally in order to throw some light on the features of the later English scene which differed from that seen in France, Germany or Italy.

Although the mesmeric state under various names has been known for centuries, it was only very gradually that its various forms came to be distinguished and the greatest confusion prevailed. The whole theory of sympathetic magnetism was being discussed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the great physician and chemist J. B. van Helmont, following Paracelsus, was prominent for his teaching and opinions. Ideas relating to the famous weapon salve and powder of sympathy led to the conception of mysterious fluids, animal spirits and nerve juices, which, in their turn, became the ancestors of modern radionic theories. The mysterious attractive power of the magnet led to the belief that objects like amulets possessed curative and other powers by virtue of imperceptible emanations, an idea held by writers like Nymann (1) who even at that time stressed the power of the imagination on bodily conditions just as Montaigne and Pomponazzi had done before him. Sir Kenelm Digby with his powder of sympathy proved to his own satisfaction the reality of action at a distance. His theory which explained these remarkable effects is hardly a scientific one, stemming as it does from the old beliefs in sympathetic magic and extending forward towards homeopathy and the doctrine that like attracts like. These somewhat mystical ideas, however, weakened as the years went by; and it was really not until the appearance of Mesmer (2) with his animal magnetism that the notion of the magnet became

linked to the idea of the "fluid" which henceforth became the centre of mesmeric theory for many years.

How far Mesmer (1734-1815) was influenced by earlier writers in the development of his ideas is not entirely clear and this is not the place to discuss the parts played by Gassner and Hell in the early course of his career, although it is certain that the latter's interest in magnets and their alleged curative properties much interested him before they parted.

Mesmer believed he had discovered a hitherto unobserved physical agent, a "fluid" universally diffused and capable of receiving and communicating impulses of various kinds. Nerves were believed to be directly affected; and since the human body itself had magnetic qualities so it became susceptible to magnetic influences. It was, therefore, this animal magnetism which could be used for curing human and animal diseases.

Owing to the success attending Mesmer's clinics, his theories became more and more studied, arousing on the one hand support and on the other rejection. Among his friends was the eminent physician Charles D'Eslon, a man of good judgment, who believed that Mesmer over-emphasized the physical aspect of his discovery and neglected the psychological. In this he agreed with the findings of the French Commission which, in its 1784 Report, emphasized the importance of the imagination in the cures and thus led the way, could Mesmer only have seen it, direct to the modern theories of suggestion and mental therapeutics.

THE RISE OF MESMERISM IN ENGLAND

Although Mesmer himself had left France for England during the Revolution and had remained there until about 1799, his presence seems to have made little impact on those interested in his system and, indeed, passed almost unnoticed. Those writers who concerned themselves seriously with the subject at all did so rather to condemn and ridicule the practice than to describe it and conduct experiments for themselves.

Attention seems first of all to have been aroused by the arrival towards 1788 of Mr. J. B. De Mainauduc (3), one of Dr. D'Eslon's pupils, who planned to form a Hygiean Society and who later gave a series of lectures on animal magnetism. He was followed by a number of other writers and lecturers who held classes and gave public talks and who were to be the forerunners of the host of itinerant speakers who later were to give public displays of the marvels of

mesmerism on platforms in the larger towns and cities of Great Britain. Not only did De Mainauduc give popular lectures for the course of which he charged thirty guineas but he also gave absent healing to sufferers residing at a distance, thus proving to his own satisfaction and theirs the power of the mesmeric influence.

In 1790 the anonymous author of *A Practical Display* . . . (4) declared that the mesmeric influence could be conveyed by mental volition as well as by the use of the hands and stated that the qualifications for a good operator were Abstraction, Affection, Intention and Volition, while the manual printed the same year entitled *A True and Genuine Discovery* (5) contains very similar material and speaks of the "effluence" as the plenum or universal fluid (p. 3) which flows from the fingers of the operator (p. 4).

Mr Holloway, another lecturer, charged his pupils five guineas, and he was one of the more successful exponents of the new art which numbered among its adherents such people as Miss Prescott, Mr. Parker, Dr. Yeldal, Mr. Cue and Mr. and Mrs. De Louthembourg. These last two were healers working in London who were described by one of their enthusiastic sponsors, Mary Pratt (6), as "recipients to receive divine Manudunctions" due to a "heavenly and divine Influx". Healing was apparently given by these people by simply touching the patient (p. 6).

Opposition to the mesmeric movement was expressed by the Rev. John Martin (7), a Baptist Minister, who held a very poor opinion of the magnetizers. They were, he thought, self-advertisers narrating tales of marvel none of which would bear inspection (p. 17). To him, it was simply a case of

"Spread your hands and dart your eyes,
With your patient sympathise;
Catch his pain, and hold it fast,
You can shake it off at last."

Similarly in a book attributed to John Pearson (8), *A plain and rational account*, a somewhat ironical attack was made on the mesmeric practitioners and their pretensions, but it was left to John Bell (9) in his book published two years later to comment more favourably on the whole question.

Bell held firmly to the idea that the magnetic influence belonged to the physical order of nature and could be conveyed to man just as well as to a steel bar (p. 18). Nevertheless, he was one of the first English operators to perceive that some sort of affinity between magnetizer and subject was essential and once this was established

the full effect of the magnetic influence could be demonstrated. He attempted to prove his thesis by stating that an Irish lady in 1786 was able to illustrate the physical qualities of the fluid by moving the needle of a compass when she approached her hand to it, an experiment which was but the precursor of the long series of similar attempts to prove the existence of a supposed "force", attempts which are still being made and pronounced successful by English practitioners today.

Bell noted not only the usual mesmeric manifestations but also the so-called "higher phenomena", such as reading print in complete darkness, an effect which later was to be shown to many people investigating the alleged clairvoyance of the entranced somnambules.

Bell's book excited considerable interest and in the next few years, as was pointed out at the time, magnetizers increased in a most remarkable manner. Opponents of the movement in favour of mesmerism were less vocal but gave vent to their opinions in emphatic terms. Thus George Winter (10) declared in 1801 that the effects of imagination were well-known and cited cases of alleged maternal impressions in support of his thesis. For him the passes made by the magnetizers were but "silly ridiculous gestures" (p. 16) and the whole of the proceedings were useless, while some of the actions were "so extremely wanton and absurd as most justly to merit censure". He went on to say that he himself had had no success whatever in alleviating the sufferings of his patients by mesmerism; but since the diseases he lists were such as dropsy, gout, tuberculosis and worms it would seem that they were hardly the type that would have yielded to mesmeric treatment.

MESMERISM IN GREAT BRITAIN DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

We hear little of any serious attempts in England to verify the alleged facts of mesmerism during the first twenty years of the nineteenth century. Interest seems to have died out in spite of the travelling lecturers and demonstrators whose performances did little to attract serious people, being produced mainly for the benefit of the illiterate and those seeking sensation. The educated classes were not anxious to be associated with those whose intellectual equipment was of the slenderest, and their own scientific leanings, if they had any, were directed rather towards the new developments in physiology and the study of mental activities. Although Herbart had

dimly seen the outline of the path that psychology was to take, the emphasis was still more physiological than psychological and the theory of the mesmeric fluid was strengthened rather than weakened by this tendency. Young's theory of light led to ideas of vibrations and undulations; and the influence of phrenological teaching by Spurzheim and his followers still further diverted any great attention from being paid to animal magnetism and its phenomena.

The incentive to further inquiry into the subject was provided later when Richard Chevenix (11) began to give demonstrations in London, not only of the effect of magnetism on disease but examples of "willing at a distance" and similar paranormal phenomena. The publication of his results in a series of articles in a London medical journal in 1829 excited considerable interest and some opposition among medical men. Among those who showed interest in the work was Dr. John Elliotson, the famous physician, who knew that Chevenix had worked in Paris under a skilful magnetizer, the Abbé Faria.

With the sudden death of Chevenix interest again waned, and it was not until 1837 that the famous French mesmerist Baron Du Potet de Sennevoy came to London, his book on the subject being translated into English and published the following year (12).

In 1831 Dr. John Elliotson had succeeded John Connolly to a professorship tenable at University College, London. He had been trained in Edinburgh, Cambridge and London and was a man of great energy, courage and mental originality, becoming not only one of the most popular teachers at the College but building up in addition a large and lucrative private practice. He was not like so many of his colleagues, frightened of anything new, and freely used the stethoscope (invented in 1819) to the amusement of many who, even as they are today, were terrified lest they be thought unorthodox.

When Baron Du Potet came to London the interest which Elliotson first took in mesmerism under Chevenix was again aroused and he became an earnest student of the novel treatment, readily perceiving that here was something new in medicine which required the most serious study. Accordingly, he began to practise himself, treating patients at the hospital and conducting experiments before a distinguished gathering, which included peers, bishops and men like Thomas Moore and Charles Dickens.

Among his patients were two hysterical young women, the Okey sisters, and it was around the heads of these two and their sponsor Elliotson that the storm broke. Looking back from what we know

about the basic principles of mesmerism, it would seem likely that the Okey sisters were unstable, highly suggestible and prone to petty frauds and tricks in which they could indulge their exhibitionist tendencies.. But Elliotson was convinced that, at least in part, they were genuine mesmeric subjects and since his theories involved the belief in the physical nature of the mesmeric fluid, his experiments were, unless very carefully performed, likely to be exposed as fallacious, just as those of Perkins had been before him when the marvelous effects of his metallic tractors were demonstrated. It was precisely here that disaster was waiting for John Elliotson. Convinced that the experiments would withstand all criticism, he took the two girls to the house of Mr. Thomas Wakley, then editor of *The Lancet*, a man who was later to become the most vicious and almost hysterical opponent of mesmerism who was ever to write about it in England. The experiments were failures: simple "control" measures showed the phenomena produced by mesmerized water or metals took place just as readily when the subjects *thought* that the objects were mesmerized; and yet even when the truth was so near it still evaded the inquirers. To Mr. Wakley and his friends the subjects were plain frauds: it apparently never occurred to them that here again it was the old question of the influence of the imagination which, had they realized it, might have opened the door much earlier to the problem of suggestion in relation to the art of healing generally.¹

With the supposed exposure of the Okeys Elliotson himself became discredited and he finally had to resign his position at the hospital and retire to private practice. But his courageous defence of his beliefs brought him many friends such as Dickens and Thackeray and in the latter's novels *Philip* and *Pendennis* he was the Dr. Goodenough of the stories.

The interest produced by the demonstration given by the Okeys was increased by the books which now began to appear even before Elliotson's resignation. Early in 1838 appeared *A Short Sketch of Animal Magnetism* by an anonymous physician (13), a work considered so important that *The Athenaeum* (17 March) gave it a review of almost six columns. Highly sceptical in tone, it quoted Elliotson as saying that although many of the phenomena were "unquestionable" he declined to believe in the higher phenomena such as the

¹ For a summary of the controversy over the Okey sisters see F. Podmore's *Mesmerism and Christian Science* (London, 1909), pp. 126-133. The book was reprinted in 1963 under the title of *From Mesmer to Christian Science* (New Hyde Park, New York) with an introduction by Eric J. Dingwall.

ability of the mesmerized subjects to see through walls, describe events at a distance and speak foreign languages which they had never learned.¹

The same journal returned to the subject on 16 June 1838 (pp. 417-421) when it gave over thirteen columns to a review of the books of Baron Du Potet (12) and Dr. Edwin Lee (14). Written in a similar vein to that printed in March, the review was, however, a little more cautious and admitted that study of the subject might possibly lead to an extension of our knowledge of the nervous system. What was more interesting in the review, however, was the attack made on the credulity of medical men generally, who so often vaunted marvellous cures produced by drugs which were soon after forgotten and consigned to oblivion. It was the "higher phenomena" which aroused the scepticism of the reviewer. Saying that "the tales of clairvoyance and prevision . . . with which our ears are dinned" were such that he could not credit his senses, even if he saw them himself, he reveals the fact that in these words he gives one of the earliest indications that alleged paranormal faculties were well-known and were being exhibited by the somnambules in the mesmeric parlours. These were the manifestations that were now arousing extreme scepticism, not so much the ordinary phenomena of the mesmeric trance. It was not only the higher phenomena that came under the writer's lash. Passing in review some recent literature, he showed how theories themselves were so wildly different as to throw discredit on all. "What then remains?", he asked, "Nothing but imagination." From this point the writer reverted to the subject of the higher phenomena, maintaining that Mesmer knew nothing of them and that the claims appeared to increase as the years went by. When "the absurdity of clairvoyance was swallowed", he wrote, "prevision was superimposed". Even all this nonsense, he continued, was said to occur quite differently at the hands of different magnetizers. These people, he concluded, "are not to be trusted to give evidence on the simplest fact or to explain the philosophy of a mousetrap" (p. 421).

Having disposed of Baron Du Potet the reviewer turned to Dr. Lee whose work he found very revealing in the light it threw on the whole question. Written in "a scrutinizing spirit" and applying a

¹ In *The Zoist* (Jan. 1845, p. 477) Elliotson stated that it was not until 1841 that he asserted the fact of vision with the eyes firmly closed and not until 1844 that he also became convinced of the highest degree of clairvoyance in which the subject knew what was happening at a great distance and was able also to describe accurately events in the lives of other persons.

"discriminating logic" the work treated at some length the findings of the French Academy of Medicine and noted that in not more than two or three instances were more wonderful phenomena submitted for inspection and that these failed. Experiments in thought-transmission gave no evidence of its existence and clairvoyance was shown either not to exist at all or to be due to fraud or careless preparation. To the reviewer in *The Athenaeum* Dr. Lee's book materially damaged the character of the witnesses whose "haste and credulity have been so effectually exposed".

In September the same year *The Athenaeum* (15) returned to the fray since the Okey-Wakley scandal provided just the excuse it wanted for an attack on Elliotson, for nothing now remained than to "laugh openly in his face". *The Lancet* was absolved for its early comments on mesmerism and received full forgiveness for its assistance in propagating this "mischievous delusion". Mesmerism had been killed by Mr. Wakley, or so it seemed to the writer of the article.

In the same year, however, a book appeared which seems to have been somewhat neglected by later writers, as it was apparently unknown both to Bramwell and other writers on hypnotism. This was an account of animal magnetism by William F. Barlow (16) in which he showed that he, at least, fully appreciated the power of the imagination in ill-health. Just as fancy can produce diseases, he wrote, so we can get rid of them by using a remedy "we deem capable of working wonders" (p. 14). Thus the healing power of mesmerism is comparable to that exercised by the charm or the amulet. It is in passages like these that we can best perceive the approach of the more critical writers to the idea of *la foi qui guérit* and the basic teachings of faith healing generally.

Inspired by the attacks on mesmerism made by the *Athenaeum*, the noted physician, Dr. John Forbes, who consistently maintained a highly critical attitude, wrote another scathing attack on Elliotson and his followers in the *British and Foreign Medical Review* for April 1839, p. 630, to which a writer signing himself E. W. C. N. vigorously replied in the pages of *The Zoist* (17).

Speaking of "paroxysms of credulity" with which medicine had just been afflicted, Dr. Forbes continued by saying that the wild doctrines of mesmerism had only to be presented to a reasonable mind to be detected and rejected, the actors declared to be deceivers or deceived and the alleged facts trampled upon with contempt. It was admitted, however, that not all the mesmerizers were arrant charlatans: some were weak dupes of knaves or of themselves; and a

few (evidently thinking of Elliotson himself) were high principled fanatics led away by love of the marvellous.

Such were the opinions (and they are quite typical of many medical men) which were being freely ventilated at the time and illustrate one of the most melancholy exhibitions of stupidity and intolerance with which the history of medicine is so full. But what galled the physicians most of all was the fact that Elliotson gave with interest all that he got. He was not in the least alarmed at accusations of unorthodoxy: he knew that in mesmerism, just as in the stethoscope, medicine had a tool which would repay careful study and lead to a greater understanding of the human economy.

The same year a very curious book was published which interested greatly those who believed that mesmeric phenomena were entirely due to "imagination". Written by Dr. John Wilson (18), once on the staff of the Middlesex Hospital in London, it contributed an account of a series of experiments on magnetizing animals such as dogs, cats, pigs, goats, geese, fish, elephants, lions and leopards. To those who, like Elliotson, held the view that mesmerism was in essence a physical process in which an "influence" was extended from operator to subject, there was nothing mysterious in the effect of the said influence on animals since, as he put it, "all animal nature is essentially the same". Imagination did not intrude and so Dr. Wilson's experiments on animals were not more striking than the Duke of Marlborough's taming of a savage dog in 1842, the Rev. T. Bartlett's mesmerizing of a bull in 1847, or the rendering docile of a Syrian bear as described in *Chambers's Journal* for October, 1849. The petty persecution to which medical mesmerists were subject was condemned by some who used the treatment in their own practice. Thus in 1843 the Scottish physician, W. Lang (19), published his account of mesmerism, stating that he did not altogether believe in the fraud of the Okeys and preferred to accept the assurances of Elliotson that many of the statements made about them were untrue. On publication the book received the usual acid review, this time by Dr. William Weir (20) of Glasgow in the January 1844 issue of *The Phrenological Journal*.

In spite of these attacks interest in mesmerism became more widespread; and in April 1843 the medical profession was disgusted to read of the publication of a new journal, *The Zoist* (21), devoted, so the prospectus informs us, to collecting and diffusing information on cerebral physiology and mesmerism, for at that time phrenology was still held to be valid by many mesmeric practitioners. The paper continued until January 1856 and contains an enormous mass of



John Elliotson (1791-1862)

from a lithograph after James Ramsay

By courtesy of the Wellcome Historical Museum and Library



material, case histories, accounts of notable cures, and general surveys of current affairs. It is full of articles by Elliotson illustrating his fighting qualities and contempt for those of his fellow medical men who refused to examine the subject in which to him the results were patent. Hardly had *The Zoist* appeared in the bookshops when another paper was issued, *The Mesmerist* (22), which published its first issue on 13 May, 1843, but apparently only survived till September, printing in all some twenty numbers. It catered for a less sophisticated audience than *The Zoist* and on 19 August published a highly amusing "Creed of the Anti-Mesmerists" which appealed to those who were becoming tired of the hysterical vituperation of the leaders of British medicine.

On the other hand, critics of mesmeric performances were not lacking. As an example of this, Mr. T. Smethurst wrote a letter to *The Medical Times* on 16 December 1843 (pp. 145-146), in which he described in detail a séance for eyeless-vision which had been held in the previous October and concerned a subject of Mr. W. H. Weekes, a Sandwich surgeon. He described in detail how the bandages were applied and how a couple of round black pads, like a pair of spectacles, were placed over the eyes, the whole procedure being, in his opinion, quite inefficacious. Weekes's reply was published on 10 February the following year, Smethurst's rejoinder being printed on 2 March.

There is little doubt that *The Zoist* exercised considerable influence among many open-minded and thinking persons, including physicians, clergy and educated laymen. For example, Miss Harriet Martineau (1802-76), the successful writer and journalist (23), gave it as her opinion that the paper exhibited what was being done in England and her knowledge of the mesmeric movement was very considerable since she had been cured by mesmerism of a serious complaint from which she had suffered for many years. The authors of books published during the issue of this journal drew ideas from its pages, developing and adding to its material the results of their own practical experiences. Thus, in order to examine the standpoint of this paper in relation to paranormal phenomena as seen in the mesmeric sleep it will be convenient to summarize some of the material volume by volume and then return to the literature proper which reached its zenith in the 1850s. In so doing it will be useful to deal at the same time with the other matters with which this report is concerned, such as the characteristics of good operators and subjects, their interpersonal relations and similar topics.

It must be clearly borne in mind that in the majority of papers

published during the first half of the nineteenth century, until the coming of Braid, the theory of the magnetic fluid, emanations, effluence—call it what you will—was widespread. Elliotson's own early belief in the existence of the fluid was probably strengthened rather than weakened by the supposed support given to it by the Reichenbach phenomena, which had become known in England towards 1846. Once these experiments (in which the subjects were not mesmerized) had become known, they were repeated by English mesmerists and the expected results duly reported. Indeed, quite long discussions were instituted by mesmerists on the nature of the fluid, its variation in different individuals, its colour, its clearness or opacity, and how the same luminous emanations could be seen in plants, animals and other creatures such as glowworms. This mention of the glowworm well illustrates the confusion in the minds of the mesmerists, who, apart altogether from their acceptance of the highly dubious Reichenbach emanations, were not sufficiently acquainted with the facts to be able to distinguish such phenomena as the alleged flames round the Reichenbach magnets from the luminescence of the firefly and the glowworm. Such opinions as these are vividly illustrated by Mr. W. Cattell's article in *The Zoist* of 1849 (24). It was this belief in the mysterious fluid that formed one of the difficulties with which mesmerizers had to contend when considering the paranormal phenomena in which they sincerely believed. It was difficult to understand how the emanation could pass through walls and across towns when action at a distance was being attempted and how it was possible for the mesmerizers themselves to direct the fluid to their own subjects.

ALLEGED PARANORMAL PHENOMENA AS RECORDED IN *The Zoist* 1843-1856

As has been said above *The Zoist* is one of our principal sources of information on the theory and practice of mesmerism during the period that it covers. Every phase of the subject was discussed; and it was John Elliotson's chief mouthpiece in his struggle against the medical profession.

Relations between Subject and Operator. The question of the best relation between the patient and the mesmerizer was one which often occupied the attention of the early writers. It was naturally connected with the general character of the patient, his or her degree of sensitivity, the nature of the disease in medical cases and the docility of the subject when experiments in the higher phenomena

were being attempted. In regard to these relations the whole question of *rappport* becomes important. In the early cases such a relation as *rappport* did not exist. It is said that it never occurred with the Okeys: anyone could touch them or awake them regardless of the operator who had mesmerized them. But in other cases, as Elliotson pointed out in 1843, it was very different and the contact of any other person than the mesmerizer could cause violent reactions (25).

A point raised by Elliotson (26) in 1844 is especially interesting in view of the Okeys' response to others than the actual mesmerizer. So great was Elizabeth's suggestibility that she would go to sleep when waiting to begin her performance, simply because she was in the presence of persons awaiting the commencement (p. 422). It was, therefore, far better to develop the *rappport* between subject and operator, which later was to become so important a part of mesmeric procedure.

Another feature of mesmeric work mentioned by writers was the mistake of making experiments in too rapid succession, as fatigue appeared to set in and failure resulted. This was often recorded in cases of clairvoyance, where failure followed upon over-stimulation, apart altogether from cases where the subject varied from day to day, being at one time acute and at another very dull. These and other facts of a like nature were described in 1844 by Dr. W. C. Engle-due (27). All these difficulties which appeared to depend on factors which were still unknown were fully recognized by Elliotson, who discussed them in detail in the pages of *The Zoist*. He was inclined to think that, apart from obvious physical differences, the mesmeric power was very much the same among most people and that the great variations observed depended on the subject and not on the operator. This would account for the fact that a mesmerizer might suddenly find a subject who displayed examples of the higher phenomena, whereas among his own patients the same mesmerizer might fail to elicit any response whatever. In this connection Elliotson (28) recognized the rôle that the attachment of the subject to the mesmerizer must play, a feature of the trance which was always stressed by the anti-mesmerists as one leading to mal-practice and scandal and which today is obviously connected with the idea of the transference. Indeed, in one case Elliotson stated that he could not mention a fly or a cheese mite without inviting an emotional scene, so acute was the jealousy displayed by the subject (p. 54).

For further more detailed information on the relation between operator and subject we shall have to turn to the books on mes-

merism, where will be seen how much the authors differed as to what were the essential characteristics to be noted. In the meantime we will now turn to the description and treatment of certain paranormal phenomena as described in the pages of *The Zoist*.

Clairvoyance.

The principal paranormal manifestation as seen among the nineteenth century mesmerists was what they called *clairvoyance*. The term was a general one and included what we now term traveling clairvoyance, the description of objects in boxes or opaque wrappings, reading sealed letters, describing playing cards and other objects held either behind the subject or in positions where normal sight was useless, and lastly the description of alleged spirits and "other world" conditions which, under the later influence of Spiritualist teaching, led directly to the so-called clairvoyant descriptions of the modern mediums. Writing in 1845, A. Wagner (29) stated that the attempt among mesmerists to produce the higher phenomena should not be encouraged (p. 28). Clairvoyance was, he stated, a "rare and dangerous crisis of the nervous life" and since almost all the clairvoyant somnambules were female, care should be exercised in stimulating the faculty.

The enormous interest in the higher phenomena of mesmerism and especially in clairvoyance was doubtless partly due to the arrival in this country of the famous nineteen-year-old French clairvoyant Alexis Didier, whose full history appears in the French Section of the present series. He and his manager, Mr. Marcillet, landed in England in 1844 and he gave a whole series of demonstrations of his powers before select and mostly invited audiences. Elliotson, who doubtless thought that Didier's performances would increase belief in mesmerism and hence improve his own position, seems to have accepted both Marcillet and his protégé, and *The Zoist* is full of accounts of his séances and the procedure generally.

One of the earliest accounts of Didier's performances is that recorded in 1844 (30). In an account of a séance at the house of Viscount Adare, Mr Atkinson noted a few facts of especial interest. He stated that the blindfold did not seem to be satisfactory and was not firmly in position "so that after a while *perhaps* he might have seen if he would" (p. 293). Moreover, Alexis was accustomed "to think aloud" and therefore seemed to guess, the result being that he was often in "great error" when he began and although nothing was said by others he went on correcting himself. "It would be as

well ", Atkinson added, " if clairvoyants said nothing and had nothing said to them, till they felt themselves certain." In spite, however, of these suggestive remarks, Atkinson appears to have been convinced that Alexis did in fact possess genuine clairvoyant powers. This belief was, it seems, based on the other feats which Alexis performed, such as describing a portrait placed behind him.

As an early account of the procedure this record shows that at times the blindfolding did not satisfy even contemporary observers and also that the methods used by the subject to describe objects and scenes opened the way to obtaining information from persons present, probably by observing their reactions to the accuracy or otherwise of his remarks. This depends, of course, on the assumption that Alexis, if blindfolded at all, could see *through* the bandage and not, as is so often the case, peer down the chinks left on the cheek on either side. The visit of Alexis to London was the reason for an outburst of the most violent and acrimonious controversy in which Dr. Elliotson and his friends joined battle with the unbelievers, among whom featured Dr. John Forbes, the editor of the *British and Foreign Medical Review*, who, after seeing the sensitive, came to the conclusion that all the phenomena were fraudulent.¹

Like Atkinson, Forbes was not satisfied with the security of the blindfold and he also suspected that some members of the very large company who attended the demonstrations may have been confederates (31, p. 12). He also dealt with another clairvoyant, Mr. G. Goble, of whom we shall hear later and who was almost certainly fraudulent.

In *The Zoist* for January 1845 Dr. Elliotson printed a general report (32) on Didier's demonstrations in London in 1844. He began by saying that for six years he had tried to obtain the higher phenomena with his patients but without success. Then, late in 1844 or early in 1845 he met with a case of " exquisite clairvoyance of the highest kind ", demonstrated by a lady whom he trusted completely. Her travelling clairvoyance was remarkable and cases of prevision were later fully substantiated. Dr. Elliotson's mind, therefore, was fully prepared to consider very seriously the seemingly miraculous powers of the French clairvoyant.

The way, however, that Alexis was allowed to demonstrate his gifts disgusted Dr. Elliotson and he was not at all surprised that the

¹ The Forbes papers are scattered in various medical journals and his views are most conveniently summarized in his book (31) from which my quotations are taken. The principal attack on Forbes will be found in *The Zoist* for Oct. 1844, pp. 393 ff.

sensitive so often met with failure. The large company of sightseers and curiosity-mongers tended to make the whole séance a show; and it is clear that the performances were very similar to such exhibitions held today by modern Spiritualists. Yet there is no doubt that he was very impressed by some of the accounts he received which were certainly astonishing enough, some of them, *if* accurately described, being clear indications of paranormal powers.

For example, an account of two experiments with Alexis was sent to Dr. Elliotson by one of his friends, who was at the University of Cambridge at the same time as himself and was once a member of the House of Commons, and this illustrates how public sittings with Alexis were conducted. He told Dr. Elliotson that he was

“ ushered into a small drawing-room, in which might be assembled some twenty or thirty ladies and gentlemen, and several of the labouring class. They were crowding round a small round card-table. I could not for some time see the chief actor. At length I made my way round, and managed to get *so near as to touch the table*. Here I found a lad of about seventeen or eighteen, with his eyes very thickly bandaged, sitting and talking shortly and nervously, rather low sometimes. He seemed oppressed from the heat of the room, and everyone talking to him at once. At length a sort of order was restored, and a window opened. I *SAW* a lady present him a letter, very closely written, in an envelope. He took it. ‘ I want to know,’ said she, ‘ what are the *four* words at the top of the *third* page?’ He twisted the letter between his thumbs, applied it to *his stomach*, put it down on the table, and in a minute said, ‘ *Decidedly!* The four first words at the top of the third page are — — — —.’ The lady opened the letter, unfolded it, and read the *VERY FOUR WORDS* he had mentioned! Another lady then said, ‘ Alexis, will you travel with me?’ ‘ Yes; give me your hand.’ She did. He then just passed his own over it, slightly clasping it, but let it go immediately, ‘ Well, I am ready; which way do you go?’ ‘ Towards Fontainebleau, (forty miles from Paris); are you there?’ ‘ Yes.’ Pray describe my house near there.’ Alexis then rapidly described the approach, the appearance, the number of stories, and the windows, very minutely, and, as the lady allowed, very correctly. She then proposed to him to go indoors, to tell her the plan of the house, &c., and then her room, and the windows, &c., and furniture, and how arranged. This he did as perfectly! She then said, ‘ You have told us, Alexis, that there is a secretaire, and which wall of the room it is placed against; is there anything upon it?’ After a pause, ‘ Yes there is; I see something.’ ‘ What is it?’ ‘ I can’t tell’; and after a moment, ‘ It is something which is not natural.’ The lady nodded assent. ‘ But what is it?’ ‘ Oh! I don’t know; I can’t say; I give it up; I can’t tell you,’ said he, in an irritated tone. ‘ Courage, courage, Alexis!’

cried Mons. Marcillet, the mesmeriser, who came near him, and threw his hands and fingers at him as if sprinkling water, 'Madame is anxious to know; you must try and tell her.' A pause. 'But I can't tell Madame.' 'Well then,' cried the mesmeriser, 'touch it, as you see it; feel it.' On this he passed his fingers very very rapidly on the green cloth half a dozen times. 'Oh!' said he, 'I feel it; it is full of small holes.' 'True,' said the lady. 'Courage, Alexis!' We were all in wonder. 'It lies,' said Alexis, 'in a slanting position, thus,' describing with his hand an angle. Presently, 'Oh! it is horrible to look at,' with a shrinking action. The lady assented. 'Oh!' said Alexis, 'there is a large hole in it. I can put my fingers in, and I feel, I feel—oh! it is teeth I feel.' The lady nodded assent, expressing wonder, and immediately Alexis shewed great terror, and trembling, cried, '*Oh, mon Dieu! c'est la tête d'un mort.*'—'It is the head of a dead man!' 'Alexis is quite right,' said the lady; 'it is so, and lying just as he describes it.' The confusion was so great at this moment that I could not make out, among the chattering, whether it was a skull, or the head of a mummy, or New Zealander, but it was as he said, *la tête d'un mort*, and a curiosity." (Z., 1845, ii, pp. 484-486).

One point which is often repeated in the accounts of these experiments is the bad and nugatory effects of what the believers called "scepticism". Thus Mr. W. H. Parsons (33), writing in 1849, stated that the experiments with Alexis made him more than ever "convinced of the extraordinary and, as yet, unaccountable power which scepticism has in obstructing the faculty". Indeed, he added, if a determined sceptic merely held in the hand an object intended for a test, it would nullify the efforts of the sensitives. Such arguments are still being used today but those advancing them seem wholly oblivious of the fact that their own scepticism, which must have preceded their belief, apparently did not hinder the faculty from showing itself and leading to their own conviction.

In spite of the propaganda put out by the magnetizers to support the claims of Alexis, there is some evidence that many were not convinced either in England or abroad. Thus Mr C. H. Townshend (1798-1868), a clerical poet of some distinction, saw Alexis in Paris in October 1851 and writing to Elliotson the following month admitted that many people represented him as a mere sham but in his own case he took every precaution not to be known to him (34).

It certainly seems that Alexis gave Mr. Townshend a most remarkable sitting. He described his two houses in detail, one at Lausanne and the other in London. He mentioned some of the contents, including a picture on marble and other facts which, it would seem, he could not possibly have normally known. Unless Mr. Townshend's memory was hopelessly at fault or that he was

suffering from auditory hallucination, this sitting with Alexis clearly suggests the exercise of paranormal powers.¹

Perhaps one of the most remarkable English travelling clairvoyants of our period and certainly the most remarkable ever reported, if we can believe the published reports, was Miss Ellen Dawson (37), an epileptic subject who, having been cured by mesmerism, became later ill with a variety of complaints suggestive of psycho-somatic disturbance. In May 1844 she came under the care of Dr. Hands in London who, having heard of her previous treatment by Du Potet, decided to apply again the magnetic treatment. Soon after this commenced Dr. Hands thought that she showed some evidence of being clairvoyant and determined to apply a few tests in order to verify this point. Having placed her in a room from which light was excluded, he gave her some coloured plates from Baron Georges Cuvier's book *The Animal Kingdom* which she proceeded to describe accurately, going on to distinguish the shades of pieces of silk presented to her. But it was the extent and range of her powers as a travelling clairvoyant that delighted Dr. Hands more than anything else. He directed her in thought to Berkeley in Gloucestershire, which is over a hundred miles from his own house in Duke Street. Mrs. Hands was in Berkeley at the time; and Miss Dawson described the house where she was staying, what she was doing, and then went on to describe the interior of the church with its monuments and the appearance of the castle, both inside and out.

"I now said let us leave the church. In *travelling* along she perceived the castle. I wished her to visit it, and soon found from her observations she had entered the hall. 'Oh, what a large room!' she exclaimed, 'look at the beautiful painted windows.' I asked what she saw at the bottom of the hall, and she described the figures in armour, the flags, swords, and spears collected there; I told her to go down the steps into the housekeeper's room,—she there saw, *or rather felt* (?), a bald-headed old man, and a woman with spectacles. I knew these parties from the description. She now entered the dining-room, and there saw and described each painting it contained, particularly the one called 'the Tribute Money.' " (Z.1845, iii, p. 230).

The park was then visited and the clairvoyant gave an accurate account of an old hollow tree which Dr. Hands knew well when he was a boy. On other occasions Miss Dawson visited New York and

¹ As the problem of the Didier brothers is dealt with in the French Section of this series, including an account of Mr. Townshend's experiences, I shall not here describe the clairvoyance of Adolphe Didier but refer the reader to G. Barth's account (35) and to his own book (36) published in London in 1856.

entered the house of the brother of Dr. Hands, describing correctly a black enamelled diamond ring which he was accustomed to wear. Later excursions took her to an American Indian Village, to Ceylon and to St. Helena. Dr. Hands stated that her accounts, as far as he knew them and was able to verify them, were remarkably accurate; and he is at some pains to point out that thought-reading could hardly account for some of the statements.

Confirmation of his results was obtained by the Hon. Miss C. Courtenay Boyle, for a time Maid of Honour to Queen Adelaide, who, in a letter following Dr. Hand's article, described other extraordinary examples of travelling clairvoyance with her at the sitting held at Duke Street. Miss Dawson described Le Havre, Rouen, and then Bath, giving a detailed account of Miss Boyle's house and the furnishing of her room.

There seems no doubt that, if Ellen Dawson's clairvoyance were genuine, then her powers varied much at different times. Dr. Elliotson (38) had eight sittings with her and she gave not the slightest trace of her clairvoyant powers.

One of the most striking examples of Miss Dawson's clairvoyant faculty was the discovery and restitution of a lady's stolen brooch, which was first recorded in the pages of *The New Monthly Belle Assemblée* (39) under the title of "Extraordinary instance of clairvoyance", an account which was later summarized with additional information by Mr. Barth (40).¹

It appears that the lady in question missed a valuable brooch in November 1848. She remembered having had it the previous August; and came to the conclusion that it must have been stolen by one of her servants, although which one she had little idea since she was often changing her staff. Not knowing what to do, she suddenly thought of the stories she had heard of mesmeric clairvoyance and accordingly visited a mesmerist, Mr. Barth, of whom she had heard but never visited. He offered to take her to see Dr. Hands, whose patient, Ellen Dawson, was, he told her, noted for her clairvoyant faculties. On 11 November she went to Duke Street and Mr. Barth proceeded to make some introductory remarks before the sitting began. Miss Dawson was told of the loss and Mr. Barth proposed that she should travel clairvoyantly to the lady's residence, which she did and described in great detail the house and the bedroom where the brooch had been left. She then described the person who had taken the brooch, the lady at once recognizing one of the servants

¹ A short summary of the case was included by Mr. F. W. H. Myers in his *Human Personality*, etc. (London, 1903), vol. i, p. 546.

whom she had never suspected. The clairvoyant described what had happened to the brooch, saying that it had been sold for very little, and then went on to say that it was in a place like a cellar together with other property. She went on to say that the person who had taken it had the case in which it was kept with diamonds in it, at home in her clothes trunk. Full instructions were given as to how it was to be recovered; and on 16 November the lady again had it in her possession. The brooch had been pawned and when challenged the thief protested her innocence. Nevertheless, on renewed threats it was finally returned through the aunt of the accused maid, together with the box and the pawnbroker's ticket.

Another incident concerning stolen property, which this time was not recovered, was recorded by the person (41) concerned in September 1852, the sitting with Miss Dawson being on 6 August. The sitting was arranged by Mr. George Barth. Arriving at his house, Mrs. E. the sitter, accompanied by her friend, was introduced to the sensitive, who was almost at once magnetized by Mr. Barth. Mrs. E. then asked her to exercise her travelling clairvoyance and go to the house in Regent's Park, London, where she (Mrs. E.) had lived two years previously. Miss Dawson then told her that she wanted to know about something that had been lost "in the front room of the second floor over the drawing-room". Proceeding, she described what had been lost as a ring, giving many details of its appearance. She then said that the ring had been stolen by a person whom she described in detail; that she had disposed of it near Blackfriars Bridge but that from that point she lost trace of it and could say no more. It is stated that these details were exact and the additional information is given that the same story had been told by the Didier brothers (36), one in London and the other in Paris (pp. 211 ff). Having finished what she had to say regarding the lost ring, Miss Dawson then described the husband of Mrs. E.'s friend, his appearance, and his life gold-digging in Australia. It was, she stated, "wonderful in its truth. I could but listen in the greatest astonishment". At the end of her account she adds some facts which appeared to her to be worthy of mention, but which may throw some light on the mental attitude of persons at the time. Saying that Miss Dawson's "eyes were still fast shut" she stated that the sensitive described "our personal appearance most accurately, Mrs. E.'s and mine, saying that I was darker in complexion, eyes, and hair than Mrs. E.: that we had striped silk dresses on alike, and the various colours that each had on."

Now, considering that Miss Dawson had been introduced to the

two ladies when they arrived, it can hardly be thought very surprising that she had noticed their appearance and what they were wearing, and it is not easy to understand why Mrs. S. was so struck by it that she thought it worth recording. Nevertheless, the details given at the sitting, if accurately recorded and not gathered from statements made by Mrs. S. and Mrs. E., are sufficiently startling to be considered as evidence that, whatever may be the explanation, Miss Dawson was, as regards her travelling clairvoyance, one of the most interesting cases in the nineteenth century in England. The problem of this case is, indeed, one of extreme difficulty. From the accounts as they stand it would seem to many that Ellen must have possessed the faculty of obtaining information apart from the ordinary channels of sense. The records are so detailed, the information so varied and the facts so unlikely to have been known normally that, at first sight, the case almost compels belief in its paranormal nature. It is true that it was not investigated in the way that a modern inquirer would be entitled to demand, but that does not seem to me sufficient to dispose of the evidence as we have it. For instance, in another incident in which Emma was involved notes of the sittings were taken and printed soon afterwards (see p. 120). In this case the clairvoyante was able to obtain information about a friend of the sitter, who was a journalist closely connected with a provincial newspaper published in Bolton. The man in question had gone to California and a striking number of facts, later verified as correct, were given, facts concerning not only the gentleman in America but also closely concerning one of his friends who shared his adventures.

The case of Ellen Dawson can be compared with the two cases of the Durham pitman's wife "Jane" recorded by F. W. H. Myers in 1884 (122, pp. 53-62) and the equally curious but perhaps less well authenticated case of the Peterhead clairvoyant John Park who in 1850 attracted much attention in the neighbourhood.

Jane was another of these subjects who seemed constantly to suffer ill-health and from 1845 onwards she was mesmerized and when in the trance used to ask to be allowed "to travel" or, in other words, to go to places which were suggested to her and describe what she saw there. There are various accounts of some of these journeys but few of the witnesses, with the exception of a physician who is called "Dr. F." [i.e., Samuel Fenwick of N. Shields], realized that such phenomena were rare or extraordinary and with the exception of Dr. F. few made any notes and their accounts therefore are derived largely from memory.

In the cases of the physician, his notes were apparently made in

1853 and in them some idea of what went on can be obtained. For example, after having mesmerized her he told her that they were beside some railings and opposite to these there was a house which he wished her to enter. She immediately replied by asking by what door she should go in and this was surprising since the house chosen had two doors and it was the only one in the square that had this feature. Having been told that it was the lower door she went on to ask whether she should go along the passage and into a room where a lady was sitting. She was then asked to go further along the passage and then described many bottles upon shelves, a book on a table, a man mixing medicines and also a head in the room. When asked what the head was like she said it was not alive and had no brains in it, and it was only later that Dr. F. was informed that there was a skull on the table.

Thinking that Jane had guessed that it was Dr. F.'s own house, he determined to lead her there and so she was told that opposite the house she had been in there was another and she answered in the affirmative when she was asked if there was a brass plate on the door and when asked to say what was on it she spelt out Dr. F.'s name. Entering the drawing-room Jane described an old lady reading a book and wearing her spectacles, having just placed some stockings in a drawer in another room. Asked to say the name of the book Jane said that the print was too small and that the old lady herself had put down the book and pushed up her spectacles.

When he got home Dr F. found his mother still sitting in the room and place that had been described, and when he had asked what she had been doing she said that she had been reading but that the print was so small that she had had to stop. She added that she had placed the stockings in a drawer that very morning.

In the case of John Park, part of whose story was published in Scottish journals in 1850, the same kind of phenomena was repeated. In this case during one of the sessions he visited a ship, describing what was happening and mentioning an accident in which the hand of a second mate had been injured. Although certain of his statements were later found to be incorrect, there does not seem to be much doubt that his phenomena excited considerable attention at the time and accounts were published in both the *Aberdeen Journal* and the *Aberdeen Herald*.

The two cases raise the same difficulties as those with Ellen Dawson. It seems to me, as it seemed to Mrs. Sidgwick (122, p. 52), that chance coincidence or shrewd guessing could hardly account for some of these results. It is true that, as in Park's case,

information was given which later proved to be inaccurate, but the amount of correct material presented cannot be considered as less than very striking and to account for it Mrs Sidgwick herself preferred what she called "a telepathic explanation", meaning the transmission of material known to one or more persons to another person in a manner hitherto unrecognized. However we may try to explain these apparently paranormal phenomena as seen in hypnotized persons, they are certainly well represented in the above three cases and suggest, to me at any rate, that such phenomena may at times occur under the conditions described. On the other hand, it does appear somewhat remarkable that such phenomena seem to have disappeared almost entirely in hypnotic sessions with ordinary persons and have only reappeared in slightly different forms with mediums whose conditions of trance have obviously close connections with those obtaining amongst mesmeric subjects over a hundred years ago.

Another of the early accounts of an English case of clairvoyance was that of the fourteen year old Thomas Laycock, a quite uneducated child from Yorkshire. The attention of readers of *The Zoist* was called to him in 1846 by the Bath physician Dr. Storer (42). This is an interesting case, since it describes how the subject's eyes were bandaged for the purpose of the experiments. Large pieces of cotton wool were placed over the eyes and these bound round with three or four handkerchiefs, two placed obliquely over each eye and the other placed transversely round the head. Pieces of lint and cotton were then inserted in any places through which it was thought that the subject might be able to see. This clumsy method of blind-folding was used during almost all the investigations into clairvoyance in the nineteenth century; and it is noteworthy that it is still employed today by entertainers who claim the same powers but who actually have no paranormal faculties whatever. It is true that some more critical observers as early as 1838 had pointed out during the clairvoyant experiments with the French sensitive Mlle Pigeaire that it would be better if the book were read directly in front of her eyes instead of on her lap, so as to prevent her from looking downwards. The suggestion was, however, refused. All that had to be done was to construct a simple box-like arrangement with front and sides of opaque material, which could be fitted over the subject's head and which, open to the air at the top and the back, would have provided ample ventilation.¹

¹ James Braid tried to persuade the professed somnambule Mlle Prudence Bernard to accept a proposal for effectually preventing normal eyesight by wearing a simple piece of apparatus, but this was refused (43, p. 115). There seems no

It is very suggestive that in the great majority of recorded clairvoyant experiments a method by which normal vision was effectually prevented was not employed, and any attempt to provide such secure methods was apparently resisted. With young Laycock, papers, books and so on were easily read, as was also the case with another youth from Bristol, Richard Ware aged seventeen, whose eyelids were fastened down with adhesive plaster (42, p. 530). In 1846 a private committee was formed at Plymouth (44) to test Laycock still further, since his honesty and that of his patron had been attacked in a local journal. The eyes were covered with pieces of plaster, a larger piece being then placed over the whole, and when this was done it was stated that the committee was satisfied that normal sight was impossible. Papers to be read were then placed on the table in front of him, i.e. *below* the level of the eyes, and successes were obtained in a number of trials. When the plaster was removed it was found that some of the upper slips had been loosened while those below had held fast. In spite of this fact, both the scrutineers who had been appointed to watch the proceedings gave it as their opinion that normal sight seemed to be impossible. It may be added, however, that one of the scrutineers, possibly suspecting that Laycock was looking downwards through the slits at the side of the nose had actually lain down on the floor to try to determine this very point but had been unable "to detect any opening by which ordinary vision could be exercised".

As we shall see later, the above is typical of the kind of clairvoyance exhibited in England in the nineteenth century. The investigators appeared incapable of using the simplest device which made the question of normal vision *quite* impossible. They preferred to employ methods which only permitted them to think it *very probable* that the subject could not see, or simply satisfied themselves that he could not do so. Why certainty was not insisted upon we

doubt that at this period numbers of stage clairvoyants, pretending to be mesmerized somnambules, were performing in public. Among them were M. and Mme Robin [i.e. H. J. Donckele], French clairvoyants who were performing in London in the 1850's (see *Illustrated London News*, 11 Dec. 1851) and who were seen by Braid (43, p. 113) and who made no secret that their results were due to a code.

In Paris such performers were common, such as A. de Caston, a well-known conjurer whose feats were mentioned by Dr. Edwin Lee (14, p. 124) and M. Cazeneuve, who was billed as "Prestidigitator to the Emperor of the French" and his charming clairvoyant assistant Mlle Alice. Whether the lesser known clairvoyants in Paris were also performers of this type, such as Calixte, Virginie and Julie, we do not know, but their exploits were publicised in the English press and excited great interest.

have no means of knowing. Today the reason, of course, is that the phenomena usually cease. It seems likely, to say the least, that it may have been the same in some cases then.

One of the most curious cases of travelling clairvoyance published in *The Zoist* (45) in 1848 was that of Miss Frances Gorman. Sickly from birth, she had had a variety of ailments, and after being five months in hospital was finally given up as incurable. As a last resort she was brought to Mr. Joseph Hands, the mesmerist, whose famous somnambule Ellen Dawson we have already described.

Miss Gorman's¹ faculties took three main forms. In the first place she gave medical diagnosis, both of her own case and of others; secondly, travelling clairvoyance; and thirdly, reading the contents of papers etc. placed in opaque receptacles. With regard to her own medical state, mesmerism soon relieved her of her symptoms; and after some time she regained her health. In her clairvoyance, she was said to be able to visit persons at a distance and in one case succeeded in finding a deed connected with her brother's house which his wife had hidden, defying up till then all his efforts to discover it. She disliked attempting to read papers in boxes, saying that it gave her a headache. In commenting upon the case, Mr. Hands stated (p. 336) that she was not "like many of my patients" apt in this faculty of describing objects in closed receptacles.

This strange power of being able to obtain information about the contents of sealed containers is vividly illustrated by the most remarkable case recorded in the nineteenth century, namely that of Major Buckley's young ladies. The first mention of this officer that I have been able to find is that in *The Zoist* in an article (46) by Dr. John Ashburner, a credulous physician, of which the substance was later issued in book form.

Major William Buckley (d. Mar. 1852) was at one time an officer in the Bengal Cavalry and after his retirement in December 1835 became a well-known figure in London society, noted for his eccentric behaviour and benevolent gallantry. With his bristling moustache and fierce expression, he was called "the Bengal Tiger" and his passion was to take bevvies of young ladies about London, accompanying them to the opera, where he had a box, and arranging parties to Richmond and excursions on the Thames. Not a breath of scandal was ever apparently involved in these matters, the old gentleman being understood merely to have a weakness for feminine youth and pleasure in catering for their enjoyment.

¹ It may be of interest to note that Miss Gorman showed no trace of clairvoyance when visited by John Elliotson.

In February 1848 Major Buckley brought to Dr. Ashburner's house two young women who had arrived three hours before in London from Cheltenham. One was twenty-six years old and the other twenty-one, and both had been subject to mesmerism for some years. It appears that Dr. Ashburner had previously proposed that a committee should be formed to investigate their clairvoyant phenomena, but this suggestion was not approved since, according to the physician, there is an "utter failure of the phenomena in the presence of severely doubting minds" (op. cit., p. 100). It seems, he stated, that "the fluid emitted from the brains of persons who are severely—and to clairvoyantes—disagreeably sceptical" is sufficient to "suffocate and destroy the developing events". Since these were apparently the views of both Buckley and Ashburner, a sitting was arranged at which only the four should be present.

At that time a popular sweetmeat took the form of walnut or hazel nut shells which after being opened were filled with small comfits and in many cases contained printed mottoes on very small slips of paper. After this insertion the nut was closed and sealed with chocolate or some such confection. Some time before the sitting Ashburner had bought twelve of the walnuts at S. Grange's shop at 176 Piccadilly and two hours before the sitting he had gone to W. T. Lawrence's at 158 Oxford Street to buy two ounces of hazel nuts.

After the two ladies had been mesmerized by Buckley one of them took one of the shells provided by Ashburner and placed it on the chimney-piece above her head. The other then did the same thing. In his account of these actions Ashburner stated that he was fully aware of the theory that the nuts might be exchanged and he watched the proceedings anxiously with this idea in view. One of them then read out the motto in her nut, which Ashburner opened, and found to be correct, the strip of paper being found to be folded up several times inside. The other then proceeded to read the motto in her shell, which on opening was also found to be correct.

After some further readings had been made, a visitor arrived to consult the physician and Ashburner asked Buckley's permission to introduce him, which was accordingly arranged. One of the young ladies suggested that the caller should take one of the shells and himself hold it while she read the motto inside. This was done and when he broke open the shell with nutcrackers he found that the reading was correct.

Three days later another sitting took place. This time Ashburner proposed that the walnut shells should be used, to which all three willingly consented. A number of successes followed; but

when one of the women read her fourth shell it was found that the motto she repeated had no resemblance to that found in the nut when it was opened, although, according to Ashburner, she described a few minor characteristics of the writing on the paper which were correct. The result of this test Ashburner found "unaccountable" (op. cit., p. 103). Now, in this second series it will be remembered that the nuts used were the *walnuts* bought by Ashburner some time prior to the first sitting three days before. It would seem possible, therefore, that the young ladies might have taken some of the walnuts away at the first sitting, putting others in their place, opened them, learnt the mottoes and then closed them. The ones chosen by them from the table could therefore have been the substituted nuts and each one could have been marked for identification. Unfortunately the sittings were in no sense experiments and no standardized conditions were applied. They were of the "parlour game" type of sittings which was the customary thing in Victorian England and which was still being carried out during the telepathic sittings with Professor Gilbert Murray, of which the details were reported by Mrs E. M. Sidgwick in 1924.

In the present instance, the mistake in the motto may have been due to the mark on the walnut being wrongly read, so that that motto actually belonged to another nut. What seems fairly clear is that it can hardly be maintained that the ladies opened the nuts then and there, unfolded the mottoes, read them, refolded them and placed them back in the shells before closing them. It would seem, therefore, that, if the phenomena were fraudulent, some substitution *must* have been employed.

The possibility of substitution struck Dr. Elliotson so forcibly that he told Dr. Ashburner that, notwithstanding the latter's conviction that the mottoes read were actually those in the nuts he had bought, he should mark them himself before presenting them. It was not sufficient, Elliotson reiterated, to be content simply with probabilities.

From what Ashburner says, it appears that this time he went to J. P. F. Coeuret's shop at 53a Drury Lane to buy some more nuts, opened them, took out the mottoes, snipped them with scissors, adding his initials to each, and then replaced them, closing each shell with chocolate. He did not try to remember what motto was in which nut, in order to avoid the possibility of thought-transference when the nuts were being read.

For the first séance of the new series Lord Adare had been invited. The first nut to be read was apparently not one of the

marked series and the last line of the motto was correctly given. Then Adare presented one of the nuts which had been opened to one of the young ladies, who declared that there was something in the nut which gave her a headache, that she was sure it had been marked and that "the very suspicion of her being guilty of fraud made her feel very ill" (op. cit., p. 106). She then began to read—

"Thy charms, my love, can make,"

but could not go on. Both ladies then left, feeling keenly hurt that they had failed so badly, and passed a restless night. When the marked motto was examined it was found that the first line had been correct.

The following day Adare, Buckley and Ashburner were the only sitters. One of the ladies had a headache and said she feared she was in too confused a state to read. But at last she said, "I see J. A. at one end of the motto, written in ink—that's a marked nut I know" and then proceeded to read the motto, being wrong in only a minor degree, since she read,—

"Love not governed by sense or reason,
Is like a chance bird out of season,"

whereas the words printed were,—

"Love not guided still by reason,
Is the chance bird of a season."

The other lady then tried to read a motto and succeeded in getting one line correct, and then the sitting closed since the clairvoyantes stated that they were too ill to continue.

This attempt to prevent substitution illustrates very clearly the incompetence of the investigators to carry out even a simple experiment, and precisely the same muddle and lack of any system is prevalent today. We do not know *when* the nuts to be marked were bought, *where* they were kept and any of the details of the arrangements. According to Ashburner, one lady succeeded in reading one line in a nut which had been opened and the motto marked, but no details are given to enable us profitably to discuss this incident. On the second day, two marked mottoes were read, with slight errors. It is not impossible, it seems, that these two nuts had been removed the previous day, replaced among the others on the second day and then chosen. The possibility of the discovery of the trick may have so disturbed the two ladies that they decided that the best thing to do was to close the sitting. Since Ashburner was clearly incapable of either designing an experiment or of describing in detail what he did, we can therefore have no certainty as to what occurred.

During the same month when the two previous sittings were held, Buckley invited Ashburner to go to the opera with him as he was being accompanied by a young lady who was able to read mottoes enclosed in nuts without being mesmerized at all. Apparently Ashburner took some nuts with him, one of which belonged to the marked series. In the case of the first unopened nut, he held it in his hand and she read it correctly: in the second opened nut she was also successful, but the all-important details of who presented it and who gave it back to Ashburner are omitted. The problem here is how the young lady got hold of the marked motto in order to read it before the experiment. Not knowing the facts, it is useless to discuss any of the possibilities which, I may add, are very numerous.

Early in March the same year Ashburner called on Buckley to find there the two young ladies from Cheltenham and the same lady he had met at the opera. This suggests that it was not impossible that the three ladies had met before and the two from Cheltenham, knowing about the marked nuts, had given the lady of the opera the means of outwitting the physician. On the present occasion Ashburner had brought some marked nuts, presumably from the same lot he had first used before. The first was read and described correctly. One of the two ladies from Cheltenham then said she would read any shell, and Ashburner then produced one of the marked ones from his pocket, which she read as,—

“ Her eye discourses,
I will answer it,”

which was correct but for the fact that the clairvoyante said “ her ” for “ your ”.

The next test to be considered before passing to other cases is that of Philip Henry, fifth Earl Stanhope (Lord Mahon), whose experience with two of Buckley's young ladies was sent together with his own statement as to its accuracy to *The Zoist* in 1850 (47). Lord Stanhope had previously bought two packets of the motto nuts from two different shops. Happening to meet Major Buckley in his carriage accompanied by a lady the Major proposed a test and asked him to take a nut from one of the packets, mark it with a file and give it to the lady, who then read out the motto. On opening it, Lord Stanhope found the words correct and the same test was repeated three times in succession.

If we had been informed *when* Lord Stanhope had bought the two packets of nuts and *where* they had been *since* they were bought, it might have been possible to suggest how these effects were pro-

duced. All he tells us, however, is that they had not been touched by any person but himself since they had been purchased. Thus the only simple normal explanation seems to be that the lady exchanged each nut for one she had already prepared, had this marked by Lord Stanhope who then gave it to her for reading.

The history of Major Buckley's young ladies is one of the most extraordinary in the history of nineteenth century clairvoyance. According to Professor William Gregory, a credulous chemist at the University of Edinburgh and the author of a long treatise (48) on animal magnetism, Buckley exhibited clairvoyance apart from the mesmeric state in 89 persons, of whom 44 could read nut mottoes, one of which contained 98 words. Altogether 4860 mottoes were read; and in regard to papers in closed boxes, some 36,000 had been read. If those in the mesmeric state as well as those in the normal condition were included, 148 had thus shown their clairvoyant powers. Forty different stores supplied the nuts; and of the 44 who gave readings when not in the mesmeric state, 42 belonged to the higher class of society. One of these actually read 103 mottoes in one day (pp. 361-363).

It was not only in the same room that Buckley's subjects read the nuts. One of them read a motto in a distant house. The lady who lived there placed a motto in a box and the clairvoyante read it at Major Buckley's. He then asked her to go to a store by travelling clairvoyance, look at the nuts and tell him if there were any new mottoes. She declared that she saw about three in each ounce, and among them the one that she had just read at a distance. Buckley then asked whether, if he went then and there to buy an ounce, he would find any new mottoes, to which she replied in the affirmative. Major Buckley left her in the mesmeric sleep, went out, bought an ounce consisting of eighteen nuts, marked them and brought them back. The clairvoyante pointed to one and told Buckley to open it. He did so, and found it contained the motto which his subject had told him was the one in the box she had previously read at a distance. Next day Buckley called on the lady in question and "saw the same motto taken from the box in which it had been put" (op. cit., pp. 442-443).

As described, this effect appears to show clear indication of paranormal ability, but as we cannot be sure that any of the relevant details are accurate and that others have not been omitted, we must leave it as it is.

It seems to me almost impossible to believe that these young ladies were genuine clairvoyantes. If, on the other hand, they were

fraudulent, then they were certainly quite clever, took a great deal of trouble and had excellent memories. Another theory is to assume that Major Buckley himself was merely having an amusing game with some of the mesmerists of the period and persuaded his young ladies to act as his accomplices in the little drama.¹

There is no doubt that, as has been said, fraud was observed at some of the popular clairvoyant demonstrations of the period. A reviewer (49), signing himself G. S., who may have been the well-known exponent of mesmerism, the Rev. G. Sandby, writing on Mr. T. H. Pasley's book (50), stated that the problem of clairvoyance was surrounded by serious difficulties as it was constantly attended by imposture and exaggeration, while weak men and artful women were for ever bringing it into discredit and contempt. Similarly Dr. Elliotson (51) in 1850 declared himself satisfied that many clairvoyants were impostors and many real clairvoyants impostors also, so far as to pretend that they had the faculty in action when they had not. He added that he placed reliance on but a few of them, so liable were they to deceive themselves and so strong the temptation to deceive others, from love of money or even from mere vanity (p. 390), an opinion also voiced by Dr. Herbert Mayo, a believer in the magnetic fluid and a somewhat credulous physician who, however, found himself forced to admit that entranced persons were liable to deceive themselves and others (52, p. 161). Moreover, in the last volume of *The Zoist* (vol. xiii, pp. 443 ff.) the editors declare that, although clairvoyance seemed unquestionable, they knew well that gross imposition was hourly practised in regard to it by both professional clairvoyants and private individuals considered to be trustworthy but influenced by their own vanity and wickedness. Indeed, they concluded, "a host of clairvoyants are impostors" and they regretted having to say that some mesmerizers were also impostors, pretending to superior powers and knowledge which they did not possess.

Unfortunately, I have not been able to discover to which clairvoyants Elliotson and *The Zoist* were actually referring, although I have a very shrewd idea as to the kind of performers of whom they were thinking. Moreover, I have not been able to find any detailed

¹ It ought, perhaps, to be stated that Major Buckley seems to have been a genuine student of the subject who at times took great care in gathering his evidence. Thus in the curious case of Mrs Anscombe (*Z.*, 1851, ix, pp. 72-73) he appears to have been careful to note dates, times and corroborative testimony and we know from William Gregory's account (48, p. 415) of the Rizzio jewels case (see *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 1895, vii, pp. 116 ff.) that he kept a note-book in which he used to jot down details of the cases that interested him.

account of the tricks that they practised; and if a record exists of any of Buckley's young ladies being caught in the act I, like Podmore, have failed hitherto to find it.

It is, however, quite possible that one of the impostors of whom these writers were thinking was George Goble, a copying clerk claiming clairvoyant powers, whose performances were described by John Forbes in the same book (31) in which he dealt with his experiences with Alexis Didier (see pp. 63 ff.).

The clairvoyant, Goble, was said to be able to read printed words enclosed in boxes without any preliminary guessing. Dr. Forbes had a number of tests with Goble and was at first so pleased that he had at last found a genuine case that he actually wrote to the famous physiologist William B. Carpenter. Finally, however, he was disillusioned, and it is not easy to see how he could ever have been deceived in the first place. Goble's method was apparently to perform when sitting or sometimes lying face downwards on a sofa and by repeatedly handling the box and squirming about to try to get a peep inside. He was, however, so clumsy that eventually, after some ingenious tests, he was led to make a confession and beg forgiveness. The case is one of that simple kind of fraud which convinced the lawyers and physicians of the period of the marvellous powers of their mesmeric protégés.

As in later periods, persons who suspected that the phenomena were fraudulent occasionally joined together in order to try to force the mesmerizers to accept stricter conditions. From the accounts in the literature it is clear that any effective inquiry and testing were resisted, just as they are today, yet those controlling the sensitives never seemed to object when heavy blindfolds, sticky tape and other painful methods of control were applied to the subject. What was objected to was a method by which it was *certain* that normal vision was excluded. Even when prizes were offered, as for example that by Sir Philip Crampton in 1846, the conditions and arrangements were not clear-cut and decisive and none of Major Buckley's feminine friends attempted the tests.¹ The fact is that every kind of obstruction was put in the way of those trying to inquire into the higher phenomena. As Professor W. Gregory (54) had to admit in 1852 "another difficulty is this: that when we meet with a good

¹ See *The Zoist*, 1852, pp. 35-37 and cf. *The Zoist*, 1846, p. 150. Crampton's original letter appeared in Ireland but was reprinted in *The Lancet* (53), and the same volume reports cases of platform performers whose shows Miss Martineau (23) characterized as "disgusting and terrible" (p. 48) and which seem to have been conducted in a far from orderly fashion.

case, there is the greatest difficulty in obtaining permission to investigate it, and still more to exhibit it even in private”.

The main difficulty, it seems, was that the private individuals who claimed to demonstrate these extraordinary powers objected to being treated as if possibly playing tricks, the result being that the investigators, if they can be called such, could not, in Gregory's words, “expect persons of honourable character to submit to a test, the application of which implies that they are, or may be, guilty of deceit” (p. 25). This statement appears to me to be one of the most important in the literature of mesmerism and the paranormal phenomena said to occur during the trance or even, as among Buckley's sensitives, in a full state of consciousness. For what could the motive of any test be unless it were a test to exclude the normal? Why all the talk and discussion about blindfolding if the very fact of applying a blindfold did not imply that merely shutting the eyes was not considered sufficient? As we have not really any detailed accounts of the more startling phenomena, are we not justified in asking whether the facts are sufficient to make us consider the records worthy of credence? According to Dr. W. Newnham, a country physician writing in 1845, whose book (55) received a long and critical review in *The Zoist*, the records and recitals were in some instances very doubtful and “even absolutely false circumstances have been narrated” (p. 237). Unfortunately Dr. Newnham gives us no examples and no references to these accusations. Again, on what grounds did George H. Lewes, the British philosopher, journalist and critic, when writing in 1853, say (56):—

“You assure me solemnly that you do not tell the Medium anything; I declare unequivocally that you *do*. It is the same in all cases of Clairvoyance: you tell all and fancy you are told. You do not tell it in so many words, but unconsciously you are made to communicate the very thing you believe is communicated to you.”

Whatever we may think of Mr. Lewes's opinion, it seems clear that independent persons of social position and balanced judgment were not particularly impressed even by performers as eminent as Alexis Didier. For example, Mrs. William Pitt Byrne, the social critic and popular writer in the periodicals of the time, describes her experiences in her informative *Gossip of the Century* (57). She says that to her the feats of Alexis appeared singularly similar to the sleight of hand tricks of ordinary conjurers, though decidedly less daring and original, and she adds the revealing statement that “most of the work was done by more or less clever guessing, sometimes wearisomely protracted” (i, p. 169). She goes on to describe the

feat of reading a word on a folded paper inside a box and states that the results were only obtained when she was present after a series of palpable guesses, during which the writer of the word was pretty sure, unconsciously, to betray himself and afford some clue to it. "Alexis would", she wrote, "begin by surmising it was a word of so many syllables; sometimes he happened to be right the first time; then he would state 'he was pretty sure it began with a vowel'—of course if it didn't there could be only one alternative,—so he was really getting on. I was disappointed, for I had expected, if he could see the word at all, he would see it all at once, but it seems this was one of the little ways of the fraternity." This account confirms from a source quite apart from the mesmerists themselves and their detractors what already had been hinted at in more official records, namely that the clairvoyants talked, fished and guessed during the performances. But if we assume that the performer was watching the faces of the experimenters, we must assume that, on certain occasions at least, the blindfold allowed direct sight in front and that vision was not restricted to peering downwards through crevices at the side of the nose as is usually the case in these exhibitions.

In a later account Mrs. Byrne tells the story of a gentleman who told a friend that he was going to write the word "orchestra" on a piece of paper to be enclosed in a sealed envelope and asked him to take this to Alexis to read. The friend did so, and Alexis soon triumphantly proclaimed the word to be "orchestra", which was promptly confirmed by the gentleman who had brought it. But when the letter was opened in his presence by the sender the word proved to be "humbug", strongly suggesting that Alexis had somehow obtained the word from the man who had brought the envelope who, without knowing it, had somehow conveyed to the clairvoyant what was written on the paper.

It may perhaps be urged that this incident has an entirely innocent interpretation and that the word was conveyed by the sender to Alexis by telepathy. This may, of course, have been so but it does not seem to have struck Mrs. Byrne as a possible explanation. For in commenting upon it she stated that "having witnessed the mode of proceeding adopted" she could "give full credence to this anecdote" (op. cit., pp. 169-170).¹

¹ Since the case of the Didier brothers is dealt with in the French Section in this series I have omitted an account of the suspicions entertained by Dr. John Forbes who, in his *Illustrations of Modern Mesmerism* gives a detailed record of his experiences, and also the narrative of Edwin Lee when describing his experiments with Alexis during the 1849 Brighton and Hastings series of sittings, which will be found in his book (58, pp. 255-280).

We have now completed our survey of material dealing with paranormal phenomena in mesmerism as described in the pages of *The Zoist*. As the leading journal dealing with the subject, it treated mesmerism from the standpoint of the practising mesmerist and educated critic: it was not, in any sense, a journal for beginners and therefore had little to say concerning facts which should already have been in the possession of its readers. Details of that kind must be sought for in the general literature of the period. We shall now proceed to examine some of the most important works of the century in order to discover what they have to say about the questions here to be discussed. We will begin therefore with the mesmerists and their subjects.

THE MESMERIST AND HIS SUBJECT

On reading the accounts by the mesmerists of their own methods and the effect on their subjects, it becomes increasingly clear that the rules and conditions of success or otherwise that they lay down are derived almost entirely from their own predilections and experience and have little or no universal validity. Moreover, it must be remembered that nearly, if not all of the early operators all believed in the existence of the mysterious fluid or effluence which emanated from the magnetizer in order to affect his subject. Thus the Rev. C. H. Townshend (59), who was a firm believer in the mesmeric fluid and the effects it might have on material objects like jewels or water, found that repeated attempts at mesmerism exhausted the operator as well as the subject. He found that dry rather than wet weather gave satisfactory results, while the presence of thunder made the faculties "singularly disordered" (op. cit., p. 175). Townshend found that his own power as an operator declined in proportion to the fatigue consequent upon the exertion exercised. Since this writer was well-educated he found ready explanations and analogies with electrical and vibratory theories, all of which he naturally applied to the relation between himself and his subjects. Among these he was lucky enough to find two clairvoyants, a young man whom he called E. A. and a lady, Anna Mesdagh, who responded to the mesmeric influence a quarter of a mile away (op. cit., pp. 314: 327).

Dr. W. Newnham, quoted above, was of the opinion that the qualities of the operator should include what he calls sound thought and a strong will. He should be benevolent, attentive to his work and confident in the efficacy of his means. Always persevering, he

should possess a reflective disposition, liberal towards others but rigid towards himself. Vanity and curiosity should be avoided and calmness cultivated (55, pp. 143 ff). The question of the desirability of remaining calm was also stressed by the Rev. George Sandby, an ardent believer in mesmerism, whose book reached its second edition in 1848 (60). Sandby, mainly following the opinions of others, has a good deal to say on the subject of operators and patients. He was apparently opposed to mesmerism unless used for medical purposes; and he held the opinion that it was unwise to mesmerize the healthy (p. 219). Operators, he thought, should have skill, practice, knowledge and a cool presence of mind, for a nervous mesmerizer was worse than a nervous patient.

Almost at the same time that Sandby's book was published there appeared another by Dr. G. Corfe (61), at one time physician at the Middlesex Hospital in London. He appears to have been a both stupid and credulous person, who held the view that it was through Major Buckley's mesmeric influence that his young ladies showed such remarkable power, but the results, he considered, were "wholly to be attributed to collusion with the devil" (p. 19). As to the patients, he records the opinion of Sir Benjamin Brodie, a well-known medical opponent of mesmerism, who gave it as his opinion that four-fifths of the female patients who suffer from diseases of the joints labour under hysteria and nothing else. This is reminiscent of Adolphe Didier's opinion that magnetism cured nervous complaints with astonishing speed and was a sovereign remedy for lumbago (36, pp. 151:155).

So long as the mesmerizers believed in the theory of the fluid affecting both human beings and inanimate objects, so long were their versions of what constituted good or bad operators and subjects likely to be coloured by their opinions. Thus William Gregory in his book (48) already cited stated that the magnetic fluid or odyle, as he called it following Reichenbach, had the marked property of affecting the nervous system (p. 294), the human body itself being a perpetual fountain of odylic force. Thus the power of the operator over the subject's volition, sensations etc. might be thought to be dependent on the magnetizer's odylic force which is superior to that of his subject.¹

In Gregory's opinion two main conditions were desirable, namely a passive and willing state of mind on the part of the subject and intense concentration on the part of the operator (p. 77).

¹ Cf. James Esdaile (62, p. 237), who speaks of the subject being saturated with the mesmeric force of the operator.

A step forward was made in 1852 when Mr. S. D. Saunders, who was at one time the Honorary Secretary to the Bristol Mesmeric Institute, published a book (63) of instructions on mesmerism generally. In this work he mentioned various diseases and how to treat them through mesmerism and declared that the treatment suggested was "capable of being administered by every healthy person" (p. 14). While these books were being published James Braid (64), a level-headed Scottish medical practitioner working in Manchester, was quietly studying mesmeric phenomena. Although at first he held the common idea that the whole thing rested on delusion and in some cases downright trickery, he wanted to see things for himself and in 1841 attended a séance with Lafontaine, the French mesmerist, and was interested in what he saw. Gradually he himself began to make experiments; and the results of his work when known were treated with scant respect both by his medical colleagues and by the mesmerists. The physicians were scornful of any of their profession who showed interest in mesmerism: the mesmerizers suspected that Braid was working on new lines which might deprive them of the marvellous and occult elements in the new cult.

First of all, Braid had decided opinions as to who were to be the operators. He regarded mesmerism, or hypnotism as he preferred to call it, as a serious subject and mesmeric treatment of disease best left in the hands of qualified physicians lest harm ensue. Secondly, (and it is here that we come to Braid's great contribution to the subject) he regarded the whole theory of the odylic or magnetic fluid as false. As regards the paranormal phenomena, Braid had little belief in them as occurring in the trance. He thought that the subject's descriptions of flames proceeding from magnets and from the fingers of the operators were due simply to suggestion. Similarly, he thought that the facts given during the clairvoyant sittings were probably due to hints and statements made by the observers and from information derived by the subject through hyperacuity of the senses. In other words, Braid was probably the first operator in England to insist on the *subjective* element in hypnosis, a fact which had already been stressed in France by Faria and Bertrand. With the disappearance of the magnetic fluid much of the more mysterious side of mesmerism vanished. It was Braid's contribution towards this end which made him the most important figure in the history of English hypnotism in the middle of the nineteenth century. For once the power of suggestion was realized, then even the phenomena associated with phrenology would fall into a truer perspective. Thus

his early favourable view of the claims of phrenology soon faded; and in a few years he was able to revise and amplify his subjective theories and began to insist more and more upon the importance of mental concentration and the influence of dominant ideas. Not only did he realize the power of suggestion in mesmerism: he also pointed out its possible effects in orthodox medicine and the patient's belief in drugs prescribed. The frock-coat, striped trousers and "bedside manner" had taken the place of the lilac silk coat and the *baquet* of the master Mesmer as he glided about amidst his patients. A new era of psycho-therapeutics had begun to dawn.

While Braid was quietly studying and developing his revolutionary theories, books were still being published in order to excite awe in the public mind. "Who has not heard of the wonderful works of Mesmerism," asked the Rev. Edwin P. Hood (65), a Congregational Minister and writer of popular biographies, "Or, at any rate, of its wonderful pretensions? Who has not heard of Animal Magnetism? of Electro-Biology? of Hypnotism?" Evidently Mr. Hood's critical faculty was not too acute, since he later dilates on the wonderful snail telegraph,¹ an account of which, he says, was "published in the grave volume of a grave professor of science" (op. cit., pp. 131; 142).

A more careful and better informed author than Hood and one who was writing at the same time was George H. Barth, whom we have already mentioned in connection with Didier's clairvoyant demonstrations and who was a firm believer in mesmeric emanations. In a manual (66) intended for operators Barth discusses both them and their subjects at some length. He maintained that mesmerists should, generally speaking, be of mature age, although with children the mesmerists should be younger and preferably women. They must have good mental power and abundant physical energy, in other words, "a strong mind in a strong body" (p. 190).

As to subjects, although Barth stated that it was generally supposed that women were more impressionable than men and that young women from fourteen to eighteen were better subjects than more adult women, he had not found this to be so in his own experience. So-called "hard-headed people" were difficult to mesmerize and in his own practice he found that one of the best subjects (as was so often the case) was a domestic servant.

It is possible that Barth got some of his ideas from a manual (67)

¹ Evidently referring to the famous claim of Allix in regard to his sympathetic snails and their exploits in the world of telepathy, which were described in the French press in 1850.

published in Montpellier in 1846 where the catalogue of qualities for operator and subject are rather similar to his.¹

So long as the theory of the fluid held the field, so long did mesmerizers insist on the importance of bodily energy, activity and strength of the operators. Thus William Davey (69), writing in 1854, spoke of the transmission from operator to patient of the "aura" or rather the *nervo-vital* fluid of his own nervous system (p. 3). Good operators were, therefore, to be found among persons of superior muscular development with broad shoulders and large heads. Davey's book must have been a popular work of reference since it gives detailed practical instructions for mesmeric procedure together with eight plates illustrating the various kinds of operating technique. Opinions such as these were shared by later writers, such as Thomas Buckland (70) whose handbook of mesmerism was in its fifth edition in 1859 and who borrowed largely from the English translations of French works such as those by J. P. F. Deleuze and A. Teste (71 and 72).

With the general progress in mesmeric studies and the gradual appreciation of the importance of Braid's work, lengthy discussion of the main features which distinguished good from bad operators began to diminish. The slow growth of disbelief in the fluid was only partially checked by the theories, stemming from America, concerning what was called the "electrical science of life", where experiments were conducted with zinc and copper discs through the employment of which remarkable phenomena were said to be produced. As the mesmeric fluid was hardly open to commercial exploitation, as were the discs, the latter had a certain vogue, stimulated perhaps by the publication of a curious book by G. W. Stone (73) on *electrobiology*, which is full of passages taken direct from the American book by J. B. Dods (74) on *electrical psychology*. Here the difference between mesmerism and electrical "psychology" is summarized and the theory as to the relation between operator and subject is interesting. "MESMERISM", Dods wrote, "is the doctrine of *sympathy*; ELECTRICAL PSYCHOLOGY is the doctrine of *IMPRESSIONS*" (p. 30). In the latter state the subject has no sympathy with the operator, he is entirely independent.

Attempts were made in England to popularize the new teaching

¹ In Germany Baron von Reichenbach published a whole book (68) on the characteristics of "sensitives" which was issued in Vienna in 1856, a volume which, I think, has never been translated into English, but it should be remembered that the author's subjects were rarely, if ever, mesmerized by him except for therapeutic reasons.

and Mr. Fiske, a pupil of Dods, gave lectures and demonstrations. The whole theory, as might have been expected, gave rise to acute controversy as it was soon apparent that the same phenomena could be induced as well without the discs as with them. Thus the power of the imagination was again stressed and tended still further to weaken belief in the mesmeric fluid or emanations from the discs.

It is probable that the "galvanic disc delusion", as it was called in England, was fostered to some extent by the interest in another curious medical fad, the so-called "metallo-therapia" whereby the curative powers of various metals was demonstrated so that many people walked with metal plates or "armatures" fastened to their limbs or lay in baths full of rusty nails and junk, proceedings which gave them lasting benefit to their health. To this was added acupuncture, which was in use in the 1830s and which proved especially useful in cases of rheumatic complaints, 85 of Cloquet's 129 cases yielding to the treatment in Paris, while in Great Britain an account of the treatment was included in the *Cyclopaedia of Practical Medicine* in 1833.¹

The use of these discs and rings was, as I have said, linked up with the whole theory of metallo-therapy, a method of treatment which was largely inspired by the work of V. Burq and his pupils in France and which was well known in England since translations of some of his material by Elliotson appeared in *The Zoist* in 1852. Thus in Northampton during the course of that year lectures on the use of these discs were given by Mr. Froy and Mr. Reynolds; and although it was pointed out that the "new science" of electro-biology was quite different from mesmerism, nevertheless observers stated that the method of producing the phenomena was clearly "nothing else than the hypnotic process with which all mesmerists are familiar" (*Z.*, 1852, x, p. 313). What was more important was that Froy actually demonstrated the fact that it was clear that the metal discs *in themselves* could not account for the results, since "by substituting for them, in some cases, small pieces of card or paper" the susceptibility of the subject was induced simply by fixing the eyes upon some given object without regard for the material of which it might consist. Reynolds, however, obviously seeing the implications involved in this candid statement, declared that the effects *were* produced *only* by the discs so that he was able to sell a considerable number of them to members of the audience at a shilling each.

¹ Dixon (75), in his book on medical clairvoyance published in 1863, touches upon metallo-therapy and it may be noted that he referred to a case of a mesmerized subject who is reported to have both seen and conversed with "spirits".

Medical opposition was not absent. A Northampton surgeon, Mr. Henry Terry, attended the final lecture by Reynolds and opened his attack in the local press. He maintained that "delusive agencies (mesmerism, &c.,) act only through the medium of the imagination" although he had to admit that powerful mental emotions may at times be productive of good. To him, mesmerism and electro-biology were the same thing under different names and as to clairvoyance he thought it "the utmost pitch of man's absurdity".

Whatever we may think of Mr Terry's view on the higher phenomena there seems no doubt that some of the subjects who came under the influence of Mr. Reynolds and his discs were seized with alarming symptoms akin to insanity. For instance, one child of 14 had to be forcibly restrained from proclaiming that Reynolds had made him fly; and he demonstrated the fact by scaling the walls of a house and sitting on the top of a gable of the roof.

It was perhaps the most important feature in the relationship between operator and patient that appears to have been the least stressed in nineteenth century mesmeric literature. I refer to the *prestige* factor. The reason for this apparent neglect was probably the fact that it was so well known as an important part of the relationship that there was no real need to lay too much stress on it. But there is no doubt that this factor was operating to a marked extent; and it was natural that it should have been so, when we consider the kind of persons who usually acted as subjects. Patients of physicians were commonly used and when healthy persons were mesmerized these were often domestic workers, labourers and other uneducated persons who would tend to look up to the operator, trust to his marvellous powers and be inclined to do what they were told whether in the mesmeric state or out of it. Precisely the same belief today is extended to medical men whose patients fully believe in the efficacy of the various coloured pills handed out to them and who swallow them without thinking and without demur.

Although paranormal phenomena were still being reported as occurring in the mesmeric trance, the whole subject was beginning to be regarded differently by medical men. It is true that attacks were still being made on some of the claims of the mesmerists, but a few of the more open-minded physicians began to realize that hypnotism was not, as previously maintained, just humbug but contained elements which required further investigation. Thus men like Alexander Wood (76) and Professor John Hughes Bennett (77) of the Department of Clinical Medicine in the University of Edinburgh, published various explanatory theories which, unfortunately, contri-

buted practically nothing towards an explanation since they were based on theories of the brain and "faculty psychology" which were hardly helpful. Nevertheless, the mesmerists continued their work and the startling experiments of the French mesmerist Louis Alphonse Cahagnet (78), whose book appeared in English in 1850, and of J. W. Haddock, whose work on somnolism reached its second edition (79) in 1851, did much to reawaken interest and divert attention from mesmerism proper to Spiritualism.

Since the extraordinary story of the clairvoyance and spiritualistic work of Adèle, Cahagnet's best subject, belongs to the French Section in this series, I shall pass on to noticing briefly Haddock's somnambule, his domestic servant Emma, whose astonishing powers set the world of English mesmerism talking.

Although Haddock himself admitted (*op. cit.*, p. 232) that it might be true that there had been a great amount of exaggeration and even of directly fraudulent misrepresentation connected with mesmerism, it can hardly be denied that, if he described the feats of his own subject with any degree of accuracy, she must have had, one might think, remarkable paranormal powers. Apart from the ordinary clairvoyant phenomena current at the time, she practised travelling clairvoyance with extraordinary success; and her skill at finding lost articles caused her to be called the Seeress of Bolton, where she achieved one of her most spectacular successes and which obtained immense publicity through the local press.

In 1849 it appears that a letter containing some bank notes and a bill of exchange was sent from Bradford to a Bolton bank. After some weeks had elapsed it was found that the bank had no record of this letter or its contents and denied having received it. No trace of the letter could be found: it apparently had completely disappeared. Dr. Haddock was then approached with the request that Emma be asked to help. After describing in detail the passage of the packet through various hands, she stated that it had actually arrived at the bank and that a thorough search must be made. At first the bank officials declined to waste further time, but at last consented and the packet was finally discovered in an inner room with a mass of old papers which might not have been disturbed for years.

Another of Emma's successes was the discovery of the thief who had taken a cash box although the person specified was not the one suspected by the loser. The man was challenged and finally confessed.

As has been said above, medical opinion had begun to change towards the ordinary phenomena of mesmerism. This was due



James Braid (1795-1860)

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[To face p. 120



partly perhaps to Braid's influence in weakening the belief in the fluid and stressing the subjective aspect, but also to the final collapse of medical opposition to the indubitable facts of anaesthesia in the mesmeric trance. After one of the most disgraceful displays of ignorance, credulity and misrepresentation, the results obtained by Dr. J. Esdaile (80) in performing numbers of major operations in India convinced many that the time for pretending that the patients were impostors had passed.

Although anaesthesia in mesmerized subjects is not a paranormal phenomenon, it may be remarked here that in England the first minor operation under mesmerism was probably that by Dr. Elliotson, when, in 1838, he inserted a seton in the neck of his London subject Elizabeth Okey, while four years later the famous case of the amputation of James Wombell's leg was performed by Mr. Ward at Wellow, Nottingham.

THOUGHT-READING AND THE COMMUNITY OF SENSATION

The firm belief in clairvoyance by the mesmerists during the first half of the nineteenth century naturally tended to make them ask themselves if some of the phenomena might be due to thought-transference and not to what they called the clairvoyant faculty.¹ Thus Mr. H. S. Thompson (82) in a very interesting paper on the power of the will over mesmeric subjects, claimed to be able to put his subjects to sleep when they had no intimation that such was his intention. Further experiments convinced him that his thoughts were, as he expressed it, "participated in" by the subject. Thus, when sitting in one room he claimed to be able to will the patient in another room to come to him and some of the effects produced were carried out when operator and patient were a considerable distance apart. Elsewhere Mr. Thompson (83) appears to have become more sceptical. He stated that he had attended the public sittings given in London by Mlle Prudence Bernard who showed the marvellous extent to which *rapt* extended from her mesmerizer to herself. The subject had her eyes bandaged and a thick shawl tied over her head. She then moved about according, so it was claimed, to the will of the mesmerizer. Although Thompson stated that he was not of the opinion that there was any deception on the part of Mlle Prudence, nevertheless he felt that, "knowing how exalted all the

¹A summary of the evidence for telepathy in hypnotism will be found in *Phantasms of the Living* (81, ii, pp. 324 ff.).

senses frequently become " it was possible that the *will* of the mesmerist was not solely responsible for the subject's behaviour.¹

For Thompson, telepathy was not only to be seen in the mesmeric state: sensitive persons were found to possess this faculty to an extent which was rarely suspected. He fully recognized the fact that all the phenomena classified under the term "community of sensation" could be ranked in the same category as telepathy. Among these strange manifestations that of the community of taste was one of the most convincing.

Unfortunately, the tests described by Thompson are only dealt with in broad outline with no details of any sort and are, therefore, not of the smallest scientific value. The fact remains, however, that most of the early mesmerists like Elliotson believed in the occurrence of thought-transference and indeed took some pains to exclude it when making their travelling clairvoyants describe scenes and narrate facts of which they were normally ignorant. On the other hand it should be noted that Braid remained sceptical as to the existence of any of the higher phenomena, holding that belief in them arose from normal, although unrecognized, causes.

It was Thompson who first exhibited to Dr. Ashburner (85) the effect of the will of the mesmerizer upon his subject. Having tried it himself, he found that some of his patients were also able to show their dependence upon the silent expression of his will, although he came to the conclusion that the will was very limited in its agency.

Wishing to see how far the exercise of his silent will could influence persons who were entire strangers and who had never been mesmerized by him, Ashburner attempted to carry out some tests while seated with others in public vehicles. For example, when sitting in a London omnibus he noticed a gentleman who came in and sat opposite a lady at whom he stared to such an extent that she became somewhat annoyed. Ashburner therefore exercised his will upon him with the surprising result that "he fell into a profound sleep in about a minute". He admitted, however, that in only a very few cases out of hundreds did he succeed in these unofficial experiments. On the other hand, he declared that he was able to exercise his will so that subjects came to him from a distance, but the

¹ This must, it seems, have been the same lady whom Braid saw in Manchester some years before and who, when it was proposed to test her eyeless-sight by fitting a simple piece of apparatus to prevent any kind of normal vision, refused (See 43, pp. 111 ff.). Charpignon, a very credulous French mesmerist, stated that on one occasion this clairvoyant was fitted with a metal mask (See 84, p. 322). Accounts of this lady's performances will be found in the French, German and Italian Sections of this series.

accounts that he gives of these incidents are not detailed enough for any profitable comment to be made upon them. As a fanatical believer in phrenology he also held the view that the exercise of the will was determined by the power of the organs of Concentrativeness, Self-esteem and Firmness. He found that concentrating his own will caused heat to become apparent in these organs.

Ashburner was one of those mesmerists who was convinced that the power of the will could be shown as acting on physical objects, and for this purpose he devised one of the many pieces of apparatus whereby a ring was suspended from a horizontal bar and when it had ceased to oscillate it could again be put in motion by an effort of will.

Of all the more serious experiments on the effect of the will of the mesmerist when exercised on persons at a distance, those conducted at the Medical School of the University and King's College Aberdeen, were probably the most important. The mesmerist chosen for the test was the famous Negro operator Mr. H. E. Lewis, whose skill and power were known throughout England at that time. The subjects, whose susceptibility had previously been tested by Mr. Lewis, were chosen from among the students, and the experiment consisted in one subject sitting in the classroom with three of the Committee while three other members remained with Mr. Lewis in another room to direct at various intervals the different movements of the subjects that they wished him to excite. Records were kept of the movements suggested and the times of each test. Similar records were also kept of what the subject did in the classroom and the times were also noted, so that at the end the two records could be compared. Not one of the tests succeeded. In one case the subject made fourteen movements, none of which bore the slightest resemblance to what Mr. Lewis was willing the subject to make.

Later experiments tested the power Mr. Lewis was supposed to possess of mesmerizing his subject at a distance, but the results showed no such power on the part of the operator but only evidence of imagination on the part of the subjects that they were being affected at a distance. The report (86) was printed in a local journal and elsewhere and its importance was stressed by the famous physiologist W. B. Carpenter in his book (87) on mesmerism (pp. 24-25; 129-131).

Of all those writers who dealt with thought-reading and community of sensation, Professor William Gregory was probably the most representative. In his *Letters* (48) he gives a long account (pp. 113 ff.) on what he calls "sympathy", or the power a sensitive

possesses of perceiving every sensation, bodily and mental, of his magnetizer. The subject feels what is felt by the operator or the person with whom he is in *rapport* as truly as if the impressions were actually made upon himself. Thus in community of taste the subject will declare that he is eating or drinking exactly what the operator has taken in his mouth, even when this is performed behind his back so that he cannot see what his magnetizer is doing. The same phenomenon can be seen in the community of touch. If a pin is thrust into the back of the operator's hand then the subject will complain of injury to his own hand and begin to rub that part of it corresponding to the spot on the operator's hand which had been pricked. These phenomena, declared Gregory (p. 115), "may be tried in all forms with perfect success in very many subjects".

In regard to sight the results were not so satisfactory; but in hearing, Gregory noted a fact of some significance. He stated that in many cases the subject hears what is said by others to the person with whom he is in *rapport*, and he added that in this way he often becomes acquainted with matters which were intended to be kept secret from him. Very wisely Gregory's conclusion was that this should be carefully attended to when experiments were made. How far Gregory and his fellow magnetizers of the period were able to avoid this sort of error we have no means of telling, but it is worth recording that it was noticed and commented on by them in their writings.

In the community of emotion can be seen the effect on the subject of feelings and emotions in his operator and even in those around him. Thus the subject is able to detect feelings of scepticism and prejudice which may inhibit the phenomena and cause distressing symptoms in him. Confusion results from the intermingling of so many streams of magnetic influence and failure to demonstrate the higher phenomena is the result, especially in public meetings or in places where many people are gathered, each with differing views and opinions on what is happening.

Thought-reading, in Gregory's opinion, differed somewhat from community of emotion. It extends to tracing intellectual processes or images in the mind and is really a kind of sympathetic clairvoyance. It was indeed, stated Gregory, "a very beautiful and interesting phenomenon". Thought-transference at this time appears to have been so common that when trying to explain the more complex phenomena of clairvoyance objectors used to say that "it was only thought-reading". As Gregory pointed out, such persons are simply falling from the frying-pan into the fire. They were,

he thought, trying to explain an apparently unaccountable phenomenon by one still more incomprehensible (op. cit., p. 123).

The phenomenon of thought-transference had, the author asserted, many forms. Placed in *rapport* with a particular person, the subject can then describe "with the greatest accuracy" what it is that is occupying the thoughts of that person. It is all described with the greatest minuteness. Moreover, the subject seems to share the memory of his operator, not only stating facts which were within the memory of the magnetizer but often stating facts once known to the operator but now forgotten by him and only then recalled to memory through their being mentioned by the subject. For example, the subject is asked to describe the operator's room, which he will then do in detail, mentioning this or that and sometimes being contradicted by the operator who, when returning home, will find that it is his own memory that is at fault and that the subject is right, since what he has been tapping is what the operator knows, even if temporarily forgotten. In this phenomenon it is, of course, possible that we have here a case of direct clairvoyance and not thought-reading, properly so-called.

Another form of thought-transference which appears to have been common during this period was describing the contents of opaque receptacles, but only when the operator himself knew what was inside. If the operator did not know the contents, then a person who did know must be present or failure would result. It seems that Gregory was aware of certain sources of error in these tests. Thus he stated that confusion would result if questions were asked and that all suggestions and leading questions should be carefully avoided and the subject encouraged to tell his own story. Past and present events, he declared, were often confused and this fact should be taken into consideration when judging the results. Sympathy could be established with a person even when he was not present, providing that some link was made between the subject and the person. A lock of hair or a piece of handwriting was often sufficient to establish this sympathy; and then the subject would describe features connected with the person with whom he had thus been placed in contact.

In summing up his conclusions Gregory pointed out that powerful sympathies and antipathies existed in most people and that these factors were responsible not only for mesmeric phenomena but for the link which binds persons together, so that a person may know when another loved one is in danger, an impression which sometimes leads to the apparition of the dying (op. cit., p. 131). All these

facts, he thought, must lead to the conclusion that there exists a certain force or influence which affects human beings in different ways.

With the growing interest in Spiritualism in the 1850s that in the phenomena of mesmerism began to decrease. Cahagnet's somnambule, Adèle, was describing spirits in the other world and persons who might have become powerful mesmeric subjects became spirit mediums instead. Moreover, the higher phenomena of mesmerism became the stock in trade of the mediums; and the confusion that followed between the mediumistic and the mesmeric trance led to a weakening of the whole mesmeric movement, of which one of the most important manifestations, namely anaesthesia, had lost its importance since the introduction of chemical anaesthetics.

Meanwhile little was published in England for the next quarter of a century. It was Spiritualism that now caught the headlines and from describing the simple phenomena of table turning and table rapping writers went on to report the marvels of lights, levitations and full-form materializations. In this connection it is of some interest to note that among those who could claim to be scientific observers, such as the famous naturalist Alfred R. Wallace, were men who had supported the claims of the mesmerists as to the higher phenomena and now turned to lend the weight of their names to the most extravagant spiritualistic claims.

The most prominent of these, perhaps, was Sir William Barrett, the physicist and Vice-President of the Society for Psychical Research and, indeed, one of its founders. In 1876 he read a paper at the Glasgow meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science on certain abnormal conditions of the mind and a revised version of this lecture was published in the *Proceedings* of the Society in April 1883. In this lecture Barrett gave an account of certain of the higher phenomena of mesmerism which he had himself observed "some years ago" when staying with a friend of his, Mr. W. E. Wilson, in County Westmeath in Ireland. Testing some of the children from the village as subjects, Barrett soon found among them an excellent exponent who exhibited most of the common phenomena of hypnotism. In another case a girl was mesmerized and it was with her that Barrett declared that he observed some remarkable examples of the higher phenomena. For instance, he describes what he calls a "community of sensation" so that whatever the operator tasted, felt or smelt was at once perceived by the subject. Not only were such sensations as those just mentioned said to be transferred. Ideas and emotions "occurring in the operator appeared to be

reproduced in the subject without the intervention of any sign, or visible or audible communication ”.

Thought-transmission was also described. Having mesmerized the subject, Barrett took a playing card at random from the pack, which was in a drawer in another room. Having looked at it, he placed it within a book which he gave to the subject, asking her what it was he had placed inside it. Holding the book close to the side of her head, she said that she saw something inside with red spots on it. Told to count the spots, she said that there were five and actually the card was the five of diamonds. Repetitions of this test succeeded, but others failed, and Barrett stated that no success was achieved when he, acting as operator, did not know himself what it was that had been concealed.

Travelling clairvoyance was then attempted and the subject told to go to Regent Street in London and say what she saw there. Thereupon she described an optician's shop, referring to some objects in the window, such as some pieces of Iceland spar crystals of which Barrett was thinking at the time.¹

In a letter to Barrett from his friend in Ireland, written in September 1876 after the meeting in Glasgow, Mr. Wilson confirmed these statements as to the occurrence of thought-transmission between operator and subject and he added the information that in some other experiments eyeless-vision was demonstrated, such as reading the hands of a watch which, with its hands altered to a position which nobody knew, was placed within a closed box. Similarly, Wilson stated that another young villager when placed in a perfectly dark room was able to tell fourteen cards correctly which were chosen at random from the pack.

How far these stories are to be believed is not easy to say. I am not aware that detailed contemporary notes, if they were indeed ever taken, have survived, and we do not even know the date on which these surprising events were said to have occurred. It is certainly extraordinary that, just by taking a few village children, Barrett should have been able to find two who were able to demonstrate to his entire satisfaction some of the most remarkable of the higher phenomena of mesmerism. But those were the days when such miracles and many others of an even more amazing nature were said to have been almost daily occurrences, both in town and country. It is indeed lamentable that scarcely a single scientific report survives which would lend its weight to the truth of these astonishing stories.

¹ Probably referring to W. Ladd and Co., Beak St.

Wallace (88) himself had first taken interest in mesmerism in 1844, when he was present at a lecture on the subject and was so interested by what he heard and saw that he himself began to make experiments. His own observations soon convinced him of the truth of phrenology, community of sensation and clairvoyance, and when he turned to Spiritualism he soon believed in most of the phenomena, including even those produced by Miss Florence Cook with her materialized form Katie King (88, pp. 119 ff.; 181 ff.). For the student of credulity the case of Wallace is of great interest. No critic can deny his scientific achievements in the realm of evolution and entomology: on the other hand, his credulity when faced with the paranormal phenomena is difficult to exaggerate. His main weakness, as was so often the case, lay in his ignorance of psychology and above all of the methods used by fraudulent mediums in their performances, but in addition to this it was, as Mr. F. W. H. Myers put it, the generosity and simplicity of his own nature which made the work of a detective impossible to him. When we know that it was Wallace who convinced himself of the paranormal faculties of the clairvoyant somnambules it is as well to remember that he it was who also proclaimed the genuineness of many of the phenomena of the nineteenth century slate-writing and materializing mediums. Is it not possible that he was deceived in the former case just as we know that he was in the latter?

LATER EXPERIMENTS IN MESMERISM

Little of real value was published in England about mesmeric phenomena until the 1880s. Under the name of hypnotism the subject was beginning to be less frightening to the orthodox medical world, although many of its mysterious aspects were still the subject of wonder for the partially educated, since they were firmly convinced that through hypnotism people gave themselves up to the power of mesmerists and that their own wills consequently became powerless, a view commonly held by religious objectors to mesmerism in the 1850s, as, for example, the anonymous author of *Mesmerism Considered* (89) who maintained that "Satan uses it" (p. 14). This aspect of the problem had become familiar to readers of fiction. Many of these books stressed the sinister aspect of mesmeric influence, some of them being issued in the United States as early as 1848 when *Agnes* (90) was published. George MacDonald's *David Elginbrod* (91) followed in 1862 and in 1880 *The Undiscovered Country* (92) was published in Boston, both novels being issued in England

where appeared in 1882 Lady Margaret Clay's romance *A Stranger in a Strange Land* (93). F. Marion Crawford's *The Witch of Prague* (94) was published in London in 1891, followed four years later by Du Maurier's *Trilby* (95) where the forbidding figure of the mesmerist musician Svengali struck terror in the hearts of the fearful, which were scarcely relieved when *Nemo* (96) appeared in 1900, in which an operation transfers the soul of a young lady to an automaton, a procedure brought on by the passionate desire of the hero to probe the secrets of the occult world of mesmerism.

These novels had clearly a marked effect in stressing the more mysterious sides of mesmerism and in persuading the reading public of its occult significance, which was one reason why scientifically minded persons did not wish to become associated with it. Moreover, the possibility of mesmerism being used by unprincipled operators in order to indulge their lustful inclinations with the innocent and unresisting was a theme not to be neglected, the best example of which being doubtless the book entitled *The Power of Mesmerism, a highly erotic narrative of voluptuous facts and fancies* (97) which appeared in 1880.

Others, less timorous however, saw that there was another side to the matter and one that had already been in the minds of many of the early mesmerists in their study of the paranormal phenomena they said they had observed. That was the influence of the phenomena on materialistic beliefs. The lessons to be learnt from the higher phenomena of mesmerism regarding the soul were clearly understood by the mesmerists themselves during the heyday of the movement. J. C. Colquhoun in his popular two volume work *Isis Revelata* (98), published in 1836, had already given it as his opinion that animal magnetism disproved materialism and supported the idea of the independent existence of the soul (ii pp. 162; 168). Again, Edwin Lee (99) quoted (p. 316) the French author Fernand Baguenault de Puchesse (100) who, in his book on immortality published in 1864, pointed out (p. 15) that in the phenomena of the magnetic sleep the soul "s'abstrait tellement des objets matériels, elle est tellement tout entière dans un monde supérieur" and that even some philosophers have been able to think that in moments like these the soul has really left the body. This speculation had also engaged the attention of F. C. Bakewell (101) thirty years previously who, discussing the natural evidence of a future life, said that if we could indeed "establish the fact of the mind operating entirely apart from matter" then the whole question could at once be disposed of (p. 323).

George Wyld in a curious work (102) published in 1883 sums up this attitude very clearly. "The highest entranced soul", he wrote, "knows, as an absolute fact, that materialism is false. It beholds its immortal life, and in the innermost secret of its own essence, it listens to the still small voice of the eternal God." (p. 31).

George Wyld had had a varied career and had been in touch with all kinds of unpopular movements and societies. In 1884 he claimed to have demonstrated by scientific experiments that "spirit" was the substance of matter and later declared that anaesthetics drove the soul or mind out of the body. He sat with the medium D. D. Home in 1854 and also with the Davenport Brothers, whose genuineness he upheld, as he did in the case of Slade with his slate-writing. He had been interested in mesmerism since 1839, when he was associated with an odd character called John Dove, who was a powerful mesmerist but who later took to alchemy. Wyld himself, a practising physician, held to the theory of the mesmeric fluid but himself preferred to call it the mesmeric aura.

In the latter years of the nineteenth century nothing in the experimental field was accomplished until the formation of the Society for Psychical Research in 1882 and the decision of the Council to appoint a Committee for the "study of hypnotism, and the forms of so-called mesmeric trance, with its alleged insensibility to pain, clairvoyance and other allied phenomena". The Honorary Secretary of this Committee was none other than the Dr. George Wyld whose book on clairvoyance was mentioned above.

Of the various Committees appointed by the Society to inquire into the paranormal, one concerned itself with the Reichenbach phenomena which had for long interested the mesmerists although his subjects were not mesmerized. The preliminary report postponed a further record till later and this was published in April 1883 (103). Although the results were not conclusive, there were several satisfactory meetings and at some of them certain tests were applied at which a young man, Mr. G. A. Smith, and a friend of his, a baker's son from Brighton, named Fred Wells, were prominent. In both these cases the subjects reported seeing luminous appearances at the poles of an electro-magnet when contact was made and one of them claimed to see faint lights with permanent steel magnets. Thus not only did Smith claim to be one of those who was able to confirm the appearance of magnetic flames which had been made so popular by Reichenbach, but also, as we shall see later, he was a remarkable mesmerist and claimed to be a telepathic agent.

In Barrett's account of these experiments it appears that the

precautions taken by those in charge of the tests were hardly sufficient. Thus, although he recognized that when the electro-magnet was magnetized the completion of the circuit might be discovered if the observer had on his person a magnetic substance which would indicate the magnetization of the electro-magnet through attraction, he merely states that with Smith such was impossible at the distance at which he stood but without giving that distance. He also adds the somewhat naïve remark that "as a precaution" Smith emptied his pockets beforehand and added that nothing aroused the smallest suspicion of the good faith of the observer in the present instance (103, p. 233).

The same year saw the publication of the S.P.R. Committee's first report (104) on mesmerism. Few details are given, but the Committee's effort to hypnotize persons by the method recommended by Braid met with only one partial success. It was only when Smith appeared as mesmerist and his friend Fred Wells as subject that things began to be worth attention. Between them they produced all the ordinary phenomena of the hypnotic state; and from the account it would seem that Wells really had been hypnotized by Smith. There then followed an exhibition of the higher phenomena. Wells was induced by Smith to show examples of community of sensation. Having blindfolded Wells, Smith stood behind him and hypnotized him. Then various parts of Smith's body were pricked or pinched and the subject was asked by Smith whether he felt anything, the phrase used being simply, "Do you feel anything?". In the first set of experiments Wells's hand was held by Smith, but in the later series no contact, so it was said, was made between the operator and the subject (p. 225).

Before I continue to describe briefly the early experiments undertaken in mesmerism by the S.P.R., the reader should be warned that there is considerable doubt as to the good faith of Smith during the tests and that he should bear this in mind in appraising their value.¹

In these experiments in the community of sensation there were 20

¹ The whole of this affair has recently been investigated by Mr. Trevor H. Hall, who in his *The Strange Case of Edmund Gurney* (London, 1964) has amassed a great deal of published and unpublished material which suggests that Smith and Blackburn began by presenting a telepathic act without any paranormal elements in it and, after the partnership dissolved, Smith continued to deceive the leaders of the Society by using various trick methods in the experiments that were carried on. For a summary of the Smith-Blackburn scandal see Appendix, p. 153. A long criticism of Mr. Hall's work by Mr. Fraser Nicol was printed in the *International Journal of Parapsychology*, 1966, viii, pp. 5 ff.

successes out of 24 trials, in which the exact spot which had been touched on Smith was indicated by the subject. As regards the use of a code, the investigators admitted (p. 227) that the impressions might conceivably have been conveyed by such a device, but they added that they were satisfied of the genuine nature of the mesmeric state and that not a single circumstance occurred during the course of the inquiry which threw any doubt on its reality or on the perfect integrity of the operator. What apparently did not occur to them was that the increased sensitivity of impression common in the mesmeric state might, assuming collusion, have been used by Smith to convey information to Wells who had been prepared to receive it. This possibility was later recognized by the investigators since in the Second Report (105) of the Committee on Mesmerism they state that where the experiments depend on the supposed *rapport* between operator and subject, then the hypothesis of collusion seems especially appropriate and the only way to meet this objection is to accumulate experiments with different subjects (p. 254). What was very curious was that, although they had actual experiments with Smith and Wells to demonstrate the extraordinary acuity of senses of the subject, it does not seem even then to have struck them that it was just here that collusion might have been most active.¹

Later tests with another subject, Mr. S. Beard, were made to demonstrate the effect of silent willing by the operator on the subject. We are not told in what relation Beard stood to Smith, the subject being merely described as "our friend, Mr. Sidney Beard", and the report is too inadequate for discussion to be profitable.

This Second Report on Mesmerism is of importance as it mentions the fact that certain experiments had been carried out which "made it almost impossible to doubt the reality of some sort of special force or virtue, passing from one organism to the other, in the process of mesmerisation" (p. 257), although the possibility of thought-transference was not excluded.

This conclusion, which was reached as a result of what I shall call "the finger experiments" is of great importance in the history of our subject, for it takes us back to the early days when the theory of the fluid or effluence was paramount and the later arguments of Braid were discounted. As I have indicated in the preceding pages, the great bulk of experimental work in mesmerism prior to the foundation of the S.P.R. is, in my view at least, almost worthless in its attempt to establish the reality of the higher phenomena with which this present report is primarily dealing. Lest it be thought

¹ For Wells's hearing when working with Smith see 105, pp. 255-256.

that I am prejudiced and over-critical in this matter, may I be permitted to quote Gurney and Myers (106) on the same theme and be it realized that they were believers in the higher phenomena as shown in persons both in the mesmeric trance and out of it. Writing in their brilliant and suggestive paper published in 1885 on some of the higher aspects of mesmerism, they say that anyone "who attempts to form a judgment of it [i.e. mesmerism] from its literature finds himself too often wading through a morass of unstable theory, played over by the *ignis fatuus* of an ill-trained imagination. Even attempts at more direct study are apt to lead the inquirer into dismal realms of credulity, ignorance and imposture; while the *genuine* facts, like other rare vital phenomena, have no particular tendency to spring up among the persons best fitted to weigh or record them."

In the Second Report above quoted are the first brief accounts of the finger experiments. According to the Report, the subject was "allowed to remain in a perfectly normal condition, with the exception of *local* effects produced on him without contact." The subject, blindfolded, was seated at a table on which his ten fingers were outspread before him. By means of a paper screen arranged in front of him it was impossible for him to see his fingers and no observer seems to have doubted the adequacy of this precaution. Two of the ten fingers were then chosen by one of the committee and silently pointed out to the mesmerist, who, standing in front of the table at some feet from the subject, proceeded to make "extremely gentle passes over them". Care was taken to avoid contact and the possible effects of air currents. To meet the latter possibility one of the committee usually made passes over the eight non-selected fingers, imitating the mode of action employed by the operator. After a minute or less the two chosen fingers became stiff and insensible and from the tests applied to them there can be little doubt that this was the case. As the Report says, this local anaesthesia " (when produced, as described, without suggestion) is a far rarer phenomenon than the general hypnotic state ".

In discussing the results of the finger experiments the committee, although seriously considering the theory of an effluence from operator to subject, were prepared to consider thought-transference as an alternative to the theory of a fluid. Evidence, however, which tended to support the latter explanation was provided by some surprising phenomena which consisted in effects produced on inorganic bodies. Thus objects which had been handled by or over which passes had been made by the operator could be recognized

and picked out from a number of similar objects by a subject sensitive to the operator's intention.

Some tests of this kind were described by the committee in their Second Report quoted above (105, pp. 261-262). It is to be noted that in these experiments the committee did not specify the identity of either operator or subject. The subject is merely said to have been "a gentleman with whom we have frequently experimented, and whose anxiety for complete tests has always been fully equal to our own": the operator is simply called the "mesmerist".

For some reason difficult to understand the committee not only failed to reveal the identity of subject and operator, but the account of the tests, which were of exceptional interest, was so badly reported as to be quite worthless from a scientific point of view. What appears to have happened was that the mesmerist was taken to a room with the committee and was then asked to mesmerize one or two of a number of objects chosen by the investigators, such as a cardboard box, a pocket book, a piece of wax, a penwiper etc. The mesmerist then left the room and the subject entered it and proceeded to pick out from various objects arranged for the purpose those which had previously been mesmerized. In one case "ten small volumes" were used "resembling each other as closely as any two peas" and in this test the subject picked out the mesmerized volume four times in succession. No contact had been made between the mesmerist and the book; and the person who had chosen the particular volume avoided watching the proceedings to eliminate giving any cues.

It is not easy to understand what was meant when the books were described. If all ten books were identical, that is to say duplicates, why not say so? If they were not, why describe them as resembling each other as closely as two peas? They could hardly have been described in this way if each book had a different wording on the spine. Details of this sort seem to indicate a muddled approach and legitimately arouse scepticism in the mind of the reader as to the accuracy and reliability of the record. Moreover, if the gentleman who acted as subject was so anxious for complete tests, how is it that, after such exceedingly remarkable results, a series of properly arranged and systematic experiments was not carried out? If it be assumed, perhaps wrongly, that Smith was the mesmerist and one of his young assistants the subject, then, assuming collusion between the two, the whole series can be discounted and needs no further discussion.

In November 1883 appeared the Third Report (107) of the S.P.R. on mesmerism. It was preceded by an account of the extra-

ordinary thought-reading powers of Mr. Guthrie's young ladies, but as these were not hypnotized they cannot be dealt with here. In a section of this Report, however, the committee mentioned the immense vogue that public thought-reading shows were having throughout the country, shows "which, however clever and interesting, have no claim to be considered 'Thought-reading' at all" (p. 9). This surprising statement, in view of the fact that the committee's favourite mesmerist was G. A. Smith, who had been Douglas Blackburn's partner in just such shows in Brighton, is frankly inexplicable unless it be assumed that the committee believed that these particular shows were genuine and all the others due to trickery. Anyhow, the mesmerist employed in the experiments discussed in the Third Report was again G. A. Smith and the subjects healthy young men as in the former series.

The first tests, made in Professor William Barrett's house in Dublin, were demonstrations of the effect of silent willing on the part of Smith. One of the experimenters had prepared two cards on which were written the words "Yes" and "No", and the experiments consisted in the subject opening his closed hand when willed to do so and keeping it closed when a negative response was required, the appropriate card being shown to Smith on each occasion. Of 20 attempts, 17 succeeded. In another series the distance between subject and operator was increased. At first Smith was in the same room: later the distance was 3 ft. (0.91 metres) and there were 25 successes out of 25 trials: at 6 ft. (1.82 metres) there were 6 successes out of 6 trials: at 12 ft. (3.65 metres) there were 6 successes out of 6 trials: and at 17 ft. (5.18 metres) the same results. In this last case Smith was outside the door, which was left only sufficiently open to pass the card in and out. Finally, Smith was taken "across the hall and placed in the dining room, at a distance of about 30 ft. (9.14 metres) from the subject" with two doors, both of which were closed, intervening. Three trials were made and all were successful. The subject failed completely in everything except Yes or No tests (107, pp. 14-16).

In these trials we are told the subject was Mr. Fearnley, an entire stranger to Smith but if the two had been acting in collusion in any way the important question as to whether they had met in Dublin just prior to the tests and had been alone together was not mentioned. For example, might it not have been that Smith asked Barrett if he could test Fearnley's capacity as a hypnotic subject and that it was then that he had given Fearnley instructions as to which signs to respond to in the mesmeric state? It is to be observed that neither

in the normal nor in the hypnotic condition was Fearnley able to tell any word or number or describe any diagram thought of or seen by the operator. Indeed, he seemed not to be susceptible to the most rudimentary forms of thought-transference proper. However, these reports are simply not detailed enough for any just appraisal to be made, since what the modern reader wishes to know depends upon his suspicion of Smith's integrity, which was never doubted by the experimenters.

Another series similar to the above was made in 1883 by Gurney with another operator, Mr. Kershaw of Southport, the subject in this case being a nurse, Mrs. Firth. Who Kershaw was, how Gurney met him and how contact was made with Mrs. Firth we are not told. Nine tests were made and of these eight were successful and one doubtful. Three days later another series was carried out by Gurney in Brighton, with a young cabinet maker as subject and Smith again as operator. The results were correct 11 times out of 12. Transference of pains and tastes were then undertaken with excellent results; and similar tests were carried out later with Kershaw again as operator and Mrs King, the wife of a clergyman, as subject. The results were not so good as with Smith's subject and on a later occasion Mrs. King twice failed completely.

These tests with Kershaw are not without importance as it can scarcely be thought very likely that the two lady subjects were both in collusion with the mesmerist to deceive the S.P.R. investigators.

Further tests were made on the community of sensation, Smith mesmerizing Conway, the cabinet maker, for the purpose of demonstrating it. Both pain and taste were successfully transferred from operator to subject.

In the year following the Kershaw experiments, further tests were carried out by Gurney and A .T. Myers (108) on the finger experiments mentioned above. Smith was again the mesmerist and the young baker, Fred Wells, the subject. The question of the fluid was uppermost in the minds of the investigators and they came to the conclusion that if such an effluence were present, then it ought not to be necessary for the operator to *know* over which fingers he was making the passes and that it ought to suffice if his hand were guided to the chosen finger by a third person. Experiments showed, however, that it was necessary for the operator to know which finger it was that he was acting upon. From this result it followed that the phenomena seemed due rather to thought-transference than to the action of the alleged fluid. One circumstance, however, proved puzzling. The investigators found that no effect at all was observed

when Smith merely gazed at the chosen finger with concentrated attention: his hand or his own finger had to be used to produce the insensitivity or rigidity.

The various experiments undertaken by the S.P.R. in the inquiry into mesmerism are almost the first to be published in the nineteenth century where the material is presented in a fairly detailed way and where proper records were made at the time and adequate discussion carried out on the nature and interpretation of the results achieved. Had Smith not been the operator in so many cases these experiments would obviously carry far more weight than they do. Even so, the results were interesting. They prompted Gurney to write one of his most controversial essays on the problems of hypnotism (109), issued in December 1884. It is here that he touches on some of the elements in hypnosis which seemed most mysterious and inexplicable. For example, he discussed the relation between the operator and subject, with special reference to the powers that some mesmerists appeared to have when compared with others. As an instance of this he cited cases where, among a number of ordinary, normal uninstructed persons, attempts to hypnotize them were very difficult for some operators, yet when another mesmerist attempted the operation it was successfully accomplished within a short time. Gurney was of the opinion that this could not be merely because the subject knew of the reputation of the successful operator: it was not, he believed, a question of prestige effect, since, in cases known to him, the subjects were unaware of the eminence of the particular mesmerist and an experimental attempt to build up prestige value in another operator failed completely.

It is clear that in these speculations Gurney was still playing with the idea of the effluence, for it was differences like these that his predecessors had thought could be attributed to the mysterious effects of the transference of the vital fluid from operator to subject. Similarly, in his treatment of the phenomena of "cross-mesmerism", that is to say the consequences that ensue when one mesmerist tries to awaken or interfere with a mesmerized subject when the latter is in *rappport* with another, he is at a loss to understand what it is that causes the violent resistance on the part of the subject, since the phenomenon of *rappport* itself had never been satisfactorily described in scientific terms. He completed his brilliant survey by referring to the finger experiments and the support that they might be thought to give to the old idea of the "specific influence".

The following year Gurney and F. W. H. Myers combined to write a paper on the higher aspects of mesmerism (106). This essay

is probably the most important of all those written during the nineteenth century. It deals with the mesmeric treatment of disease, silent willing and willing at a distance. With regard to the first, it is pointed out how the introduction of chemical anaesthetics cut short the advance of the study of the relief of pain through mesmerism and thus removed from the mesmerists the one spectacular proof of their claim for recognition. Moreover, the statements of persons as to whether they felt pain or not were as clear in the early days as in later times, whereas the accounts of the diseases and ailments said to be cured by mesmerism were vague and lacking any such proof as that afforded by the relief and banishment of pain.

From the point of view of the paranormal element in mesmeric healing, it is sufficient to remark that the view of the authors on this subject was precisely the same as is the view of well-informed persons today, namely that, taking all the relevant facts into account, there remains a residuum of cases which are very difficult to deal with in the present state of our knowledge.

The point on which the authors laid especial stress was the power that some mesmerists seemed to exercise as compared with that shown by others, a point to which we have already briefly referred. Thus in the case of Braid it was clear that his successes were such that it seemed that he must have had great curative "power", whatever that might be; and the significance of the rarity of such strong operative faculties had been little realized. Similarly, with Esdaile, the results which he obtained in Indian hospitals were of such a kind that in England similar phenomena could be produced by only a few exceptional persons.

The whole of these observations were made, it is clear, with the idea of the fluid or effluence before the minds of the authors. It was known that Esdaile had complete belief in the effluence and pointed to his own work in magnetizing objects as proof of it. For instance, he was able to banish pain in subjects who had simply been asked to drink medicated water, which had previously been magnetized by him, without, he stated, any possibility that the patients could have known that any such treatment had been given to their potion. Even if we suppose this to have been the case, the authors rightly suggested that, were the whole idea of the fluid to be a delusion, the information as to the state of the water might have been transferred to them telepathically by Esdaile himself.

It is somewhat amusing to hear modern physicians discuss hypnotism and its phenomena with reference to Braid and above all to Esdaile, whose work on anaesthesia they no longer have the

temerity to deny but whose work on the mesmeric effluence they pass over as not worthy of attention.

After a critical, concise and admirably arranged discussion of the evidence and the problems arising from it, Gurney and Myers concluded by saying that it was possible that the final solution might not yet have been surmised by anybody, but there was no reason why everybody should not cordially unite in seeking it (106, p. 413). Eighty years later we are no nearer to even a partial solution of certain problems in hypnotism.

Having dealt with mesmeric healing the authors then passed to the much more controversial subject of silent willing, both in the proximity of the subject and at a distance. One point to which attention was directed and which again was closely connected with the existence of the fluid was that concerned with the alleged necessity of exercising volition and strong concentration during the willing process. Opinions on this varied much during the century. Townshend and Esdaile stressed the necessity of active volition: Elliotson and others flatly denied it.

After a number of anecdotal records of examples of silent willing, it was stated that there "is hardly any well-attested record of the induction of *actions*, when the 'willer' and the 'willed' have been further removed from one another than two neighbouring rooms" (106, p. 419), and in this connection it is somewhat odd that the authors do not so much as mention the Scottish experiments with Mr. Lewis (see p. 123) where such willing on a student in an adjoining room completely failed in every instance.

The position, then, adopted by Gurney and Myers at the time their paper was written was quite clear-cut and unambiguous. They clearly distinguished mesmerism from hypnotism, adhering to the idea of the effluence whereas the exponents of the latter preferred the theory of monoideism and automatic obedience as the key to the whole range of phenomena. Moreover, what influenced them in their sympathetic attitude towards the mesmeric point of view was clearly the success of their finger experiments with G. A. Smith, which were again discussed the same year in a paper (110) on local anaesthesia induced in the normal state by mesmeric passes. In this series of tests it was admitted (p. 455) that the proximity of operator to the subject made it hard to "preclude the former from informing the latter, by auditory or other signs" which was the chosen finger, but that the experimenters had "every reason to believe Mr. Smith to be as much interested in carrying out a genuine experiment as the other persons present".

The next paper (111) by F. W. H. Myers published in 1886 does not deal with any experiments in paranormal phenomena, but he stated that the discovery of telepathy had, in his opinion, already been achieved (p. 20); and a following paper (112) on telepathic hypnotism dealt with this matter in detail, although the greater part of it described the phenomena associated with the famous French somnambule Léonie, whose case is treated in the French Section¹ of this series.

It was the result of the Léonie experiments, some of which Myers himself observed at Le Havre, which again inclined the S.P.R. group towards favouring the idea of the effluence as explaining at least some of the paranormal phenomena observed in the mesmeric state. Myers saw clearly the difficulties involved which other less acute minds had failed to perceive or perhaps to attempt to discuss. To suppose that this effluence was able to be directed to a distance, passing through solid obstacles and across wide areas was a supposition which would hardly commend itself to any but the most simple minds. On the other hand, to repeat the parrot cry of "suggestion" was to explain nothing and leave the question without making any attempt to describe how suggestion operated at a distance. Myers saw clearly the dilemma but boldly grappled with it, since he was not in the least frightened of the possibility of thought-transference and indeed already believed in it. Thus he attempted in his paper to build a bridge between the mesmeric and hypnotic theories and in doing this he began first of all to define his terms. Taking "suggestion" in the first place, he distinguished the various meanings which had been attached to it and then passed to the different ways by which the hypnotic state was achieved, such as massive, monotonous and localized stimulation together with the much more controversial agencies such as the action of certain metals. In these latter experiments Myers had to rely almost entirely on the French operators whose works early convinced him of the reality of their claims. Yet to him the main interest was the question of *telepathy*, whether seen in the normal state or during the course of the mesmeric sleep. It was Myers who saw more clearly than most that telepathy was not easy to correlate with neural forces, as compared with the mysterious rays and vibrations which are still discussed outside the English-speaking world. On the other hand, he was not happy at dismissing all physical bases and thus had to adopt the

¹ Another account in English of these experiments will be found in *Mental Suggestion* by J. Ochorowicz (New York, 1891), pp. 81 ff., and a shorter summary in *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. ii, pp. 678 ff.

position where a sharply defined distinction between mind and matter would not be readily assumed and where experiments in observation alone should act as guides. Between hypnotic thought-transmission and the simplest phenomena of the trance Myers saw a kind of gradation according to a whole scheme of varying factors connected with both operator and subject. Like every true parapsychologist Myers put forward these tentative suggestions for the purpose of criticism and discussion: truth, he stated, emerges more readily from error than from confusion (112, p. 182).

One of the most curious hypnotic phenomena is the reckoning of time by somnambules. This, however, cannot be regarded as a paranormal phenomenon, although the process of reckoning is still obscure. As early as 1887 Gurney, in another of his brilliant papers (113) dealt with this question (pp. 286 ff.), but does not appear to have made any of the experiments, which were carried out much later. Again, in his later paper (114) on the different stages of hypnotic memory, he was at pains to show how, if personality as some believed was closely linked with memory, then hypnotism was hardly a subject to be neglected, since the study of it might throw light on the nature of memory as seen in different forms of consciousness.

In most of these exploratory tests undertaken by the S.P.R. in the 1880s the subjects were usually simple and, for the most part, uneducated young men of the working or lower middle class. Thus the relation of the subject to the operator was for the most part that of an inferior to a superior, and there can be little doubt that the prestige factor was quite an important part of the experimental set-up. Moreover, other national differences were, according to Myers, apparent in the capacity of subjects. In an important contribution (115) on various cases of alleged hypnotic hyperaesthesia, he pointed to the small amount of work done in England since 1883, whereas in France much more had been done and the English investigators found it an important part of their task to report and discuss the experiments carried out there. This, he thought, was due to what may have been a "racial" difference, which no effort could nullify (p. 539).

It is to be noted here that in this same paper Myers stated that it was shown in the case of a subject mesmerized by Smith that even when Gurney was shouting continuously into the ear of the entranced somnambule he did not hear Gurney at all but responded to "the lightest whisper" uttered by the operator (i.e. Smith) who "stood at a distance" (p. 538). If this be so and if we assume that the

finger experiments were arranged between the subject and Smith, then their validity must, it seems, fall to the ground as in these tests Smith was quite close to the subject.

During the autumn and winter of 1887 Gurney continued his series of finger experiments at Brighton. The importance of these tests in the history of the occurrence of paranormal phenomena in the mesmeric trance was fully recognized by Gurney and his associates, since the question of the effluence on the one hand and possible thought-transference on the other seemed to them the only alternatives. The question of Smith's possible collusion with the subjects they dismissed as a theory not really worth more discussion than their own collusion. He was treated simply as a co-investigator.

Five subjects it is said, were employed in some 160 experiments, Smith being the operator throughout. A variety of experiments were tried both with and without screens over the chosen fingers, and so many successes were scored that it was clear that the subject was actually affected in some way. Later, points on the arm were chosen which were to become insensitive and these also led to a considerable measure of success. In 1888 Gurney published a brief account (116) of the series and it is to this paper that the reader's attention is directed should he wish to learn further details. The same year Gurney issued another valuable paper (117) on hypnotism and telepathy. Here he discussed the facts relating to hypnotic influence at a distance, with special reference to the French experiments at Le Havre which will be found described in the French Section in this series. It was through his acceptance of those results that Gurney was led to discard the idea of the effluence, at least in relation to effects exercised on a subject at a distance from the operator. The alternative of suggestion via thought-transference seemed to him a far better description of what occurred; and the Society's experiments in that direction confirmed his view as to its probability in the French tests. In other words, the communication in this case was *psychical* and not *physical* (p. 225). By this he meant that particular ideas in two minds had so corresponded that it would appear that they were connected as cause and effect, in spite of the fact that the ordinary channels of sense were excluded and no peripheral stimulation had taken place. A third theory could, however, be formulated, namely that a "psychical force" was responsible, different from any known "force", and it is here that Gurney bluntly admitted that such a view involved what he thought must be a complete breach in the physical order.

Having summed up his theories on this question, Gurney proceeded to show how telepathic hypnotism could be linked with other examples of the process both in experimental and spontaneous cases. He examined the whole concept of influence at a distance in detail and then went on to initiate one of the best discussions of the nature of the alleged hypnotic *rapport* which had up to that time appeared. Since he was still somewhat in favour of the idea of a specific physical influence in certain cases, he added in support of this notion some curious examples of apparent physical effects as seen among persons playing the "willing game" and from this he returned to the subject of the finger experiments as pointing in the same direction.

As will be remembered, in these experiments the operator mesmerized certain chosen fingers of the subject's hands although without any contact being made. According to Gurney there would seem to have been only two possible ways in which the finger could have felt the proximity of the operator's hand, either by air currents or by a sense of warmth. Since the subjects were not in a hypnotic state, this kind of hyperaesthesia did not seem likely, but, in order to avoid it, Smith was instructed to make no movements but merely to hold his hand quite still over the selected finger, at a distance varying from a third of an inch (25 mm.) to 2 inches (5 cm.). A further test was tried in which Gurney held his own hand over another finger, but this rarely produced any effect; and in addition it was found that no effect at all was produced if Smith merely exercised his will and made no movement.

In discussing these puzzling results (117, pp. 255-256) Gurney listed some possible explanations and the whole paper should be carefully read by anyone anxious to become acquainted with these remarkable tests, since as Gurney himself remarked (p. 257), "no conceivable explanation of the facts could deprive them of their exceptional interest". The possibility of the explanation being that Smith and the subject were in collusion was not one which Gurney envisaged, since as we have already said, the S.P.R. group had complete faith in Smith's integrity.

With the death of Edmund Gurney in June 1888 there came to an end his series of brilliant papers on paranormal phenomena in hypnotic conditions and with their cessation the Society lost one of its greatest members. Professor and Mrs. Sidgwick, however, assisted by others, determined to continue the hypnotic tests in thought-transference with Smith and his subjects; and the first paper (118) on the subject was published in December 1889 as a

part of the S.P.R. *Proceedings*.¹ This paper indicated clearly that the experimenters still had the most complete faith in Smith. Yet the results might have suggested that more caution in this respect would have been advisable. Transference of numbers was passed by the operator to the hypnotized subject and in these tests 644 were tried, with Smith in the same room, with 131 successes; and 228 with Smith out of the room but not far away, with only 9 successes. Eight other persons apart from Smith acted as agents but they either failed to hypnotize the subject or to transfer any impression at all. Even when Smith hypnotized the subject for them they still failed to transfer any impression whatever. Moreover, Smith himself failed when the subject was not hypnotized. What the investigators failed to do, mainly on account of their naïve faith in Smith, was to bring from London a subject whom Smith had never met or seen before and then, without permitting Smith and the subject to be alone together for an instant, to try the experiment in order to disprove the possibility of collusion.

In July 1890 the Society issued a circular on hypnotism in which much information and excellent advice was given. Although a good deal was said concerning the various phenomena, stress was laid at the same time on the fact that hypnotic suggestion was simply an exaggerated example of what takes place in the normal state and can produce only results similar in kind. In this statement we can see how, even as early as 1890, paranormal phenomena occurring in the hypnotic trance, in spite of the experiments already printed by the Society, were not regarded as worth even a passing mention. Other writers, however, were not so guarded. James Coates (119) in his popular manual of instruction issued three years later dealt with both clairvoyance and prevision, including instruction on how to mesmerize vicious horses stressing the advantage of practising on the animals in zoos, although adding cautiously "this may not always be satisfactory" (p. 119).

Now that mesmerism was becoming better known to the educated classes, belief in the older theories began to fade. But the more popular writers still clung to such old-fashioned methods as mesmerizing through the employment of zinc and copper discs (W. Rose, 120) and complete belief in the magnetic fluid which,

¹ These experiments were summarized by F. Podmore in his *Studies in Psychical Research* (London, 1897), pp. 214 ff., and in his *The Naturalisation of the Supernatural* (London, 1908), pp. 16 ff. They were the subject of criticism by A. Lehmann and F. C. C. Hansen in *Philosophische Studien*, 1895, xi, pp. 471-530, to which Professor Sidgwick replied in *Proc. S. P. R.*, 1896, xii, pp. 298-318.

according to D. Younger (121), could be felt by patients " coursing along the nerves " (p. 35). This author, who was the sponsor of the Alofas series of herbal medicines, was noted for curing Mr. S. C. Hall of a bad attack of lumbago (p. 106), but he made no extravagant claims, stating that great patience and perseverance was needed to obtain clairvoyance (p. 94) and that when prevision was manifested its content was mainly medical, dealing with the physical state of the subjects themselves.

In 1891 Mrs. Sidgwick wrote a long paper (122) on clairvoyance, which contributed little to what was already known but which included two cases of clairvoyance in the mesmeric state, which we have already mentioned, the first that of a young man of Peterhead in Aberdeenshire and the second concerning the subject " Jane ", the wife of a Durham pit man who gave many exhibitions in the 1850s to private individuals of her powers of travelling clairvoyance, the records being very similar to those contributed during the same period to the pages of *The Zoist*, and which we have already described.

The next paper (123) on clairvoyance was that by Dr. T. A. Backman, a Swedish physician who described some of the effects he had obtained with a number of uneducated young Swedish women who demonstrated travelling clairvoyance in the mesmeric state. There was a suggestion of prevision in some of the experiments but the series had little scientific value since notes were generally not taken or corroborative evidence obtained. Nevertheless, in August 1891, F. W. H. Myers, accompanied by Professor Charles Richet, Dr. A. T. Myers and M. Houdaille, visited Dr. T. A. Backman, but they were able to work satisfactorily with only one of the subjects and the series they had with her were not long enough to justify any independent conclusion, although two successes were scored which seemed to corroborate Dr. Backman's results (124). One fact worth recording is that in these experiments in travelling clairvoyance the operator used to get the subjects to remember after waking the impressions received during the trance and thus add to the information they had been given through being able to co-ordinate the ideas in the waking state.

Further details of the Backman series were printed by the Society later (125); and although in England clairvoyance seemed less and less common, popular writers claimed still to be able to produce it in chosen subjects, sometimes without any previous course of mesmerism. Thus Joseph Darby (126), when visiting a friend one evening was asked to mesmerize a young manservant, who soon

passed into trance and gave a remarkable exhibition of travelling lucidity, describing Mr. Darby's house and giving many correct details.

At about this time some of the more open-minded and younger physicians operating in England began to take an interest in the experiments sponsored by the S.P.R. Among them was Dr. H. E. Wingfield who tried to repeat the finger experiments of Edmund Gurney. In 1891 he reviewed Liébeault's book (127) on the mechanism of suggestion in therapeutic work and there stated that, so far, he saw no reason to believe in the existence of telepathy, which suggests that he had seen no examples of it in his own subjects.

In 1890-1892 Mrs. Sidgwick and Miss Alice Johnson went to Brighton to continue the series of tests of which the results were printed in the *Proceedings* of the Society (118) and which we have already summarized, while their second report (128) appeared in December 1892. Among the subjects were three, Messrs. P. and T. and Miss B., who had already acted in the same rôle but in addition three more young men were employed who had formerly been the assistants to a travelling hypnotist, but who at the end of the exhibition had remained at Brighton.

Apart from G. A. Smith, who again acted as principal operator, the hypnotizers were Professor William Barrett, who mesmerized Mr. T. once, and Miss Charlesworth, who tried a few times but failed to get a single example of alleged thought-transference. In the previous series when Smith had been the operator and when he and the subject had been in the same room, the success had been very marked (128, p. 536): when in different rooms some slight success had been achieved with Mr. P., none with Mr. T. and it had hardly been tried with Miss B. Among the tests now attempted were those involving the transference of numbers, ideas apart from numbers, local anaesthesia and rigidity through mental suggestion. For details of the series the full report should be consulted, or the abstract of both series which was later printed by Podmore (129), but a word should be added here on the attempted repetition of the finger experiments carried out formerly by Gurney and of which an account has already been given.

The hands of the subject were, as before, placed through apertures in a screen so that he could see neither his hands nor the operator. A finger was chosen and Smith asked to direct his attention to the finger in question and to will it to become rigid and insensitive. The theory that air currents might have been felt over the chosen finger, an idea formerly put forward by Gurney as a possible

explanation, was now sometimes excluded by placing a sheet of glass between the fingers of the subject and those of the operator. Moreover, in this series, Smith was in some cases asked not to put his own fingers near those of the subject but to remain with folded arms merely looking at the finger affected.

Summarizing the results of all the finger experiments the report states that when Smith pointed at the chosen finger there were 25 trials with 19 successes and 6 failures: with the glass screen, there were 21 trials with 18 successes and 3 failures: with Smith in the same room but not pointing and standing at $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 12 ft. off ($\cdot 76$ metres to $3\cdot 65$ metres) 37 trials were made, with 19 successes, 2 partial successes and 16 failures. When Smith was in another room across the passage but with both doors open, 6 trials were made of which 3 were successful and 3 were failures: with Smith in another room and the door closed, 14 trials gave 12 failures and 2 partial successes: and finally with Smith pointing by willing that no effect should follow, 4 tests gave 4 successes. Thus, taking all the tests together, there were 107 trials of which 63 were successful, 40 failures and 4 partial successes (128, p. 587).

These test are of great importance, since they are the first attempt at a systematically arranged series since the beginning of the century. The investigators were satisfied that the results showed telepathy in action, but can we now share their opinion, knowing what we do about the history of Smith? Again, are *all* the facts given? It looks very much as if some are not and highly relevant ones at that. For example on pages 593-594, we are told quite casually that "various persons not mentioned in our paper" and some of them "quite good hypnotic subjects" were mesmerized by Smith and produced no results whatever. It is legitimate to ask who these persons were and is it not quite possible that they were neither friends nor acquaintances of Smith and, assuming Smith's complicity, had had no opportunity to work in collusion with him? The whole series of these tests was carried out under the belief that Smith was one of themselves and therefore not open to any real doubt. It is probable that the experiments were discussed in full with him and future plans revealed. He was thus able, had he and his subjects willed, to prepare them in advance. Even after the Blackburn scandal had broken out Mrs. Sidgwick never lost her naïve belief in persons whom she herself favoured and who were not physical mediums. It did not seem to strike her as at all odd that it was almost only through Smith that the subjects were able to succeed in the finger experiments just as it never struck her that people would think it somewhat strange

that she never tried to insist on the simplest control conditions being applied to the Gilbert Murray experiments in telepathy. The basic reason for this blindness was simple: Mrs. Sidgwick herself as well as the other early investigators were consumed with a passion to prove telepathy, for, if telepathy could be proved it might open the way to an easier acceptance of survival and psychical research might become as Sir William Barrett once told me, "a handmaid to religion".

In 1893 the S.P.R. formed a Committee for the systematic investigation of hypnotic phenomena and among the members were Dr. J. M. Bramwell, a physician noted for his interest in hypnotism, Dr. A. T. Myers and G. A. Smith. In February 1894 the Committee reported that they regretted the dearth of subjects which had hindered their inquiry as they did not like to keep having to fall back upon "young men, generally uneducated, who are accustomed to being hypnotized, and who have to be paid for their time". This clearly refers to Smith's friends in Brighton; but what is important is to note that even by 1894 subjects were becoming fewer and those who could show the higher phenomena were not to be found except in one case where Smith happened to be the operator. By May 1894 the Committee had discovered nine persons, five of whom were paid, but no details of any paranormal phenomena being observed were given. The Secretary of the Committee was recorded as being G. A. Smith.

While this Committee was sitting Dr. Ernest Hart, a London medical man, published a book (130) attacking the claims of the investigators of the higher phenomena and stating that in his opinion the whole subject was suspect. He held the view that impostors started with the Okeys and Elliotson and that the extreme credulity of Luys was the cause of this eminent French hypnotist being deceived by his fraudulent subjects. Dr. Hart declared that higher phenomena did not take place in a genuine manner, since all were either fraudulent or due to self-deception.

In the Report (131) for 1894-5 the S.P.R. Committee stated that 18 subjects had been hypnotized and experiments for thought-transference attempted. The names of the operators are not given. All we know is that all the results were negative.

In May 1896 the Society, discussing the work of its Committee, stated that they had been working with 12 subjects but no evidence for telepathy had emerged. No details as to operators or subjects were stated, as was also the case in the 1897 Report, when subjects were obtained by advertising and a large number came forward as the result. From the meagre details given it would seem no higher

phenomena were detected, but again we are not told who the operators were.

In December 1896 Dr. J. M. Bramwell, whom we have mentioned above, contributed two long papers (132, 133) to the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R. The first deals with hypnotic phenomena observed by the author in the course of his practice as a medical practitioner. He showed that susceptibility to hypnosis on the part of the subject varied in proportion to his powers of *concentration*. Voluntary attention was essential: those who were normal, in good health and without trace of hysteria were the best subjects. Sex appeared to exert no influence on susceptibility. He then proceeded to an account of some of the phenomena he had observed, such as the remarkable appreciation of time, memory, waking and hypnotic automatism, *rappport*, self-hypnosis and the use of suggestion in morbid conditions. Finally he stated that, in his view, the main difference between the hypnotized and the non-hypnotized subject consisted in the superiority of the former over the latter in his having acquired a far-reaching power over his own organism, a power not shared by the other. In conclusion, it is to be noted that Bramwell made no mention whatever of *any* of the higher phenomena being observed by himself during his inquiries.

In his second paper he provided the best summary of various views on hypnotism which had appeared up to the date of his contribution. He discussed the various schools of thought, criticized the findings and asked a whole series of questions which were commonly raised together with his answers to each. But again the reader will fail to find any mention or discussion of the higher phenomena. This cannot be because Bramwell never had the occasion to meet subjects who were profound somnambules or on whom painless operations could be performed. Indeed, he stated (p. 235) that nowhere had he observed more profound subjects than among his own patients, and yet he apparently failed to produce in them any trace of thought-reading, clairvoyance or community of sensation. Moreover, the fact that he declined even to discuss in print the marvels produced by Smith under scrutiny of Mr. Myers, Professor and Mrs. Sidgwick, and Miss Alice Johnson rather suggests that he did not believe in them. The first paper mentioned above was read in part by Bramwell on 5 June 1896 and in the printed version (134) of the discussion that followed there is no mention of anybody asking the lecturer whether he had observed any of the higher phenomena in his practice. If such a question had been asked it is omitted. An abbreviated form (135) of the second paper

was read on 10 July of the same year and on this occasion Sir William Barrett asked Dr. Bramwell how he explained the phenomena in the finger experiments, which pointed to the existence of the magnetic fluid which he believed to be a reality. The lecturer's reply to this important question is omitted.

Barrett's belief in the magnetic fluid, although still widely diffused on the Continent, was not shared by many in England. Dr. C. T. Green (136) in 1895 said that his experience suggested that "something" did seem to pass from operator to subject during mesmeric treatment and that there was good reason to believe that "an aura or influence" passed from the hands of the mesmerist. Similarly, two years later F. H. Randall (137) mentioned a "magnetic flow"; and in the course of his manual of instruction declared that, whereas operators should be healthy, vital and robust (p. 14) there was no rule for subjects, but passive, stolid types were to be preferred and not those subject to anxiety or nervousness (p. 22), opinions very similar to those voiced by Dr. J. M. Creed (138) in 1889 working with Australian patients.¹

In July 1898 the British Medical Association held its annual meeting. Hypnotism was discussed in the Psychological Section and the content of the papers was largely medical, with the exception of that by F. W. H. Myers who, with his usual courage, mentioned the higher phenomena which he believed could be observed in certain cases. In the report (140) of the meeting published by the Society for Psychical Research in December, no mention is made of any other speakers touching upon this aspect of his paper, so we must assume that it was ignored.

As the century drew to its close a voice was again heard in defence of the observers of the marvellous mesmeric phenomena of the 1850s. Alfred Russel Wallace, who still appeared totally unable to understand the nature of the evidence required in parapsychology, wrote a long attack (141) on Frank Podmore who, in a paper on Mrs. Piper in December 1898, had expressed the view that the lucidity of the French clairvoyant Alexis Didier was, in all probability, not genuine (142, pp. 53 ff.). In his reply in the *Journal* of the S.P.R. in March 1899 Podmore tried briefly to meet Wallace's

¹ In 1897 the second edition of a little book (139) by Mr. R. H. Vincent was published. He had hypnotized a number of Oxford undergraduates and confirmed the view that healthy, normal young people made excellent subjects. He also conducted some curious trials in hyperaesthesia and also in hypnotizing animals, but there is no account of any tests in which he was able to produce clairvoyance, telepathy or community of sensation in any of his subjects.

objections and it seems clear that at that time he had lost any faith that he might previously have had in the existence of the higher phenomena as reported by the mid-nineteenth century mesmerists. Similarly, his views on the existence of the effluence were attacked in the following issue, with many quotations from French sources which are examined elsewhere in this series. Interest was veering towards the trance phenomena of the mediums: the finger experiments were abandoned; and although it had been shown that undergraduates could be excellent subjects and the leaders of the S.P.R. had many close contacts with Cambridge, no tests were apparently made. It almost looked as if the Society had given up hope that hypnotic subjects would again demonstrate satisfactorily the existence and genuine character of the higher phenomena.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

On considering the history of mesmerism, hypnotism and the so-called higher phenomena as outlined in the preceding pages, one fact is clearly apparent. In the early days the occurrence in England of such phenomena as clairvoyance and the community of sensation was not generally reported: it was only gradually, with increasing interest, that these manifestations became more and more widely known and became part of the views held by those who knew most of the mesmeric movement and its practitioners. Yet, as we have seen, some warning voices were raised and others expressed total disbelief in the reports issued by people as eminent in their professions as Elliotson and Gregory. Just as the 1870s were the golden age of Spiritualism, so were the 1850s the age of mesmerism and in both the most marvellous phenomena were reported. Yet, as the years went by less and less was heard of them: mesmeric subjects seemed no longer able to show the extraordinary examples of travelling clairvoyance which they had previously exhibited; itinerant performers gave platform shows of the common phenomena of the trance, but when the turn came for demonstrating clairvoyance or thought-reading, trickery was almost always apparent.

With the rise in the 1880s of better prepared and controlled experiments by the S.P.R., some of the higher phenomena were, it was thought, clearly demonstrated by Smith's somnambules, although with the facts as we now know them it can hardly be maintained that these results are wholly free from doubt. At the close of the century in England there does not seem to have been a single

subject who was able to exhibit the higher phenomena of mesmerism under satisfactory conditions.

It was not quite the same thing with the spirit mediums. Subjects for hypnosis could be obtained with ease: the universities abounded with students who made excellent subjects: but when the trance was induced the higher phenomena simply did not appear. It was as if something was lacking in the operator or the subject or both, something which the 1850s provided but the 1880s failed to provide. A comparison with what happened in other countries will be interesting, when summarizing final conclusions and appraising results generally.

From the works of the mesmerists of the nineteenth century emerges a clear picture of what they considered to be the best features of operators and subjects. Believing, as so many did, in the vital effluence, they stressed the need for a sound, healthy constitution in the case of the operator, who must also be a person full of confidence and belief in his own powers, which would lend support to the prestige with which he hoped to influence his subjects. As to the subjects themselves, the mesmerists soon discovered that the best were normal, healthy, somewhat phlegmatic persons. It did not much matter whether they were men or women, provided that nervous, anxious and hysterical types were avoided. Male operators soon learnt of the possibility of transference in female subjects; and it was this fact that was undoubtedly the reason for the many hints of moral dangers with which the literature abounds.

These views of what constitute good and bad operators and subjects are not markedly different from those held today, if we take into consideration the preoccupation of the early operators with the idea of the fluid and its connection with nervous energy. It is only regarding the higher phenomena that opinions differ radically and profoundly. In the first eighty years of the nineteenth century belief in these phenomena was held by practically all operators with possibly the exception of James Braid: by 1880 cases were getting fewer and by the end of the century the S.P.R. apparently could not discover a single case. They had simply disappeared, just as had physical mediums in the mid-twentieth century. The reason for this I am not prepared to guess, although a number of theories might be propounded. In any case we are dealing with the history of mesmerism only up to 1900. Whatever may be the reason, it is certainly of great interest and importance.

APPENDIX

As has been said in the text, popular platform presentations of alleged mesmeric phenomena were quite common in the 1880s in England and among the performers in the fashionable watering-place of Brighton were two young men, Douglas Blackburn and George Albert Smith. They had much success, since they showed not only ordinary mesmeric effects but a thought-reading exhibition and their attendance was often requested at charity fêtes and so on.

In the journal *Light*, of 26 August 1882, Mr. Blackburn wrote a letter describing some of the remarkable telepathic phenomena between himself and Mr. Smith; and it was then that, after letters had passed, Myers and Gurney went to Brighton to see the couple. Experiments seem to have begun with them in December 1882 and were thought to be very striking, it being quite clear that both Myers and Gurney were of the opinion that the results might indeed be due to genuine thought-transference. Further series in London took place later, the results being published by the S.P.R. in Volume I of the *Proceedings*. These results were clearly sensational and there is little doubt that the Committee was inclined to believe in the genuine nature of the performance.

The next phase in the story was that after the series of demonstrations recorded by the S.P.R., Myers and Gurney, for, it is said, reasons considered sufficient but unconnected with the experiments, had no more tests with Mr. Blackburn. Indeed, all communication by Blackburn with the leading workers in psychical research ceased shortly after these experiments.

In 1884 Blackburn's book (143) was published and in this volume reference is made (p. 29) to the S.P.R. experiments but without any mention of Smith or even that the author was himself a partner in thought-reading demonstrations. Nevertheless, Blackburn mentions hypnotic shows (p. 57) and frequent alleged exposures of fraud, including the use of codes such as used by Herriot and his subject Little Louie.¹

The next event to be noted was the publication of the series of

¹ Professor Robertson, a stage hypnotist, published a book (144) of codes, signals, etc., in 1883 and in the course of his discussion mentions (p. 43) the use of confederates amongst the audience.

articles in the London newspaper *The Westminster Gazette* by Mr. B. Willson on occultism and common sense, later to be issued in book form (145). The articles excited considerable interest since they were favourable towards the claims of the psychical researchers and consequently drew some opposition from critical readers. Thus on 26 November 1907 Dr. H. B. Donkin wrote (146) to the newspaper saying that the tests at which two outside critics were present at some Smith-Blackburn experiments were omitted in the account of the sittings printed by the S.P.R. To this challenging statement Mrs. Sidgwick replied three days later, saying that these sittings could not be identified (147), an astonishing rebuttal considering what followed, since it had to be left to Donkin himself (148) to supply the Society with the approximate dates of these sittings and the names of some of the invited critics, one of whom was Sir James Crichton-Browne. The latter on 29 January 1908 then added a withering postscript to the controversy (149). He declared that both he and Romanes, who was also present, suspected that a code was being used and so took some extra precautions, at which the phenomena ceased. Myers then admitted, so he alleged, that the tests had been failures and stated that this was due to Sir James's "offensive incredulity", to which the physician replied that he hoped he would always show offensive incredulity when he found himself in the presence of patent imposture. Podmore (150) followed with a weak defence and it was left to Blackburn (as we shall see later) to describe his own reactions to the incident. Meanwhile it is noteworthy that no mention of this episode is to be found either in the *Journal* or *Proceedings* of the S.P.R.

It was not until December of the same year (1908) that a fresh sensation broke the silence, for in a succession of issues of the London journal *John Bull* (151) appeared the *Confessions of a Famous Medium. Story of the Great "Scientific" Hoax* by Blackburn himself. In this series he stated that all the experiments in the 1880s were fraudulent and that he and Smith had worked the most ingenious series of codes and tricks on the S.P.R. investigators who were completely taken in by them. The accounts given by the writer of the S.P.R. experimenters must have caused them and their supporters the most extreme irritation. He speaks of their "guileless enthusiasm" and states that these "delightfully simple souls" took in reality the feeblest precautions against fraud, so keen were they to get results. Indeed, the account he gives of the experiments is an acute survey of events which at other times and places must have been noted by every critical observer in similar "experiments" everywhere. For ex-

ample Blackburn averred that when the precautions taken proved too hard to circumvent, the usual excuses were made for failure; and the performers then suggested fresh tests, to which the investigators at once agreed, innocently accepting the reasons given for lack of results by the agent or percipient. As to the detection of the current in the magnets during the Reichenbach inquiry (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. i. pp. 232 ff.) he stated that all Smith had to do was to slip a pen nib into his mouth when his head was near the poles. The account given by Sir William Barrett of these tests is sufficient indication of the attitude of the investigators and amply confirms Blackburn's estimate of this and their methods.

In a later issue (9 Jan. 1909) Blackburn described the incident mentioned above when he and Smith were nearly caught out by Sir James Crichton-Browne who was invited to be present along with Galton and Romanes. He declared that Crichton-Browne showed his hand too soon and so they had to be more careful, explaining their failure as due to his antipathetic attitude, thus confirming what Sir James himself had said in his letter to *The Westminster Gazette*. These extraordinary allegations were discussed by the Council of the S.P.R. which decided to treat Blackburn and his confessions with the contempt that both were thought to merit. It believed that it would be simply playing his game to treat him seriously, although they did not specify of what nature the game consisted. At the same time they circulated a private and confidential pamphlet to those interested which was signed by Miss Alice Johnson. On behalf of the Council she had been to see Smith, who repudiated the articles entirely. He assured her that the experiments had been all bona fide and that there was no code. Miss Johnson thereupon came to the surprising conclusion that the whole "confession" was merely made by Blackburn in the hope of creating a journalistic sensation. Smith never seems to have taken any action in defending his reputation against these allegations by his former colleague; and it is also interesting to note that Miss Johnson makes no mention whatever in her pamphlet of the opinion of Crichton-Browne and of the view that he had expressed to Myers that the performance at which he was present was due to patent imposture.

The situation unfortunately was not to end there. In 1911 Blackburn returned to the charge and wrote a long account of the whole affair in the London *Daily News* of 1 September 1911. This article is of great interest and importance, since it gives his views of the outlook, methods and experimental procedure of the leading parapsychologists in the S.P.R. in the 1880s. Many of these acute

observations and conclusions have a ring of truth in them audible to anyone who has worked with psychical researchers. Moreover, the article demonstrates knowledge of how to produce fake results and score off coincidental successes, which suggests that Blackburn must have possessed very considerable knowledge of the whole procedure.

The article produced a stir not only in England but as far as New York where *The Evening Sun* of 13 September published a long leading article on the revelations.

The Council of the Society, now forced to publish something for the benefit of the members, devoted part of their privately printed *Journal* of 11 October to a discussion of it. Smith, who had been thought by Blackburn to be no longer alive, again stated that it was an "amazing piece of invention" and denied the story from beginning to end. Sir William Barrett declared that he, Myers and Gurney had the most absolute confidence in Smith, and Mrs. Sidgwick also wrote a letter to the *Daily News* supporting Smith and attacking Blackburn. The same year Barrett published his book *Psychical Research*, in which he made no mention whatever of the Blackburn confession.

In September 1917 Blackburn made another statement (152) about what he called "the series of bogus telepathic experiments which completely hoaxed the late F. W. H. Myers, Edmund Gurney, Frank Podmore, and others". Declaring that the hoax could never have been continued but for the extraordinary gullibility of Myers and Gurney, he stated that he and Smith began their demonstrations as a drawing-room amusement and were so astonished that the results were accepted that their youthful vanity was excited. Blackburn continued by saying that he regretted this youthful escapade, since he had come to recognize the characters of those who investigated Smith and himself. Above all, he went on, Mr. Myers was too sensitive and too much out of touch with the hard realities of life to hurt people by expressing doubts as to their good faith. He had to acknowledge the absolute honesty and intent of many of the leading occultists of the past forty years, but he suspected that any one of them might be roped in by a confidence trick at the first time of asking.

It has been thought necessary to discuss the Smith-Blackburn scandal in this Appendix since the experiments in the investigation of paranormal phenomena in the hypnotic state which were instituted by the S.P.R. in 1882 and carried on till after Gurney's death in 1888 depend in a *large degree* on the integrity of Smith. If Smith was, as Blackburn stated, in collusion with him in the early experi-

ments and was a highly skilled performer, then the results of the later work which, to a certain extent at least, rested on the complete belief in him by the investigators, must be dubious. That he was a good hypnotist cannot be doubted. This, however, does nothing to relieve us of the suspicion that if he were not genuine his powers might possibly have been used to further deception on the part of his subjects without their being consciously aware of it.

In trying to decide this matter there is one point which has, so far as I know, never yet been squarely faced, least of all by the leaders of the S.P.R. in their support of Smith and denunciation of Blackburn. One fact is perfectly clear and is not disputed. Before Smith and Blackburn were in touch with the S.P.R. they had been giving thought-reading shows in public and at bazaars and charity entertainments in Brighton and their services were much in demand. Now are we really expected to believe that these two performers were in truth a powerful agent and a marvellously sensitive percipient who produced these results by telepathy? Knowing what we do today, does it seem likely that they were genuine thought-readers any more than the Zancigs and the Piddingtons who came after them in England? Yet if we decide that their shows were just clever demonstrations and had nothing paranormal about them, then the inference seems clear. It is that Smith and Blackburn were simply showmen and that Blackburn's confession may have been true and if true then all the later marvellous results with Smith acting as agent in the hypnotic and other experiments must at least be suspect. When I talked to Smith in 1954 I asked him how if, as he asserted, their shows had been genuine telepathic demonstrations, Blackburn had in his writings shown such detailed knowledge of the most ingenious methods of faking and code work, to which I got no satisfactory reply.

It must be borne in mind that Smith was a person with a most ingenious mind and when very young the temptation, as Blackburn puts it, "to bamboozle" the S.P.R. investigators thoroughly must have been very great. Later in life he was instrumental with Charles Urban in developing the Kinemacolor pictures (patented in 1908), a process which was used in showing the Coronation of King George V, the earlier results having been previously exhibited in the London Society of Arts in 1908.

The reader has now an outline of the facts before him and it remains for him to decide whether these early experiments in thought-transmission, community of sensation etc. were due to collusion between Smith and Blackburn in the first stage and later

to arrangement between Smith and the mesmerized subjects. The alternative is that Blackburn's confession was an invention and due to a motive hitherto not satisfactorily explained and that his former colleague, also from a motive unexplained, never took any more drastic action than a blank denial. In any case it must also be borne in mind that if the confession was even in part true then the accounts of the investigators of what happened would have to be taken with extreme caution. One example will suffice. In the *Second Report on Thought-Transference* (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. i, p. 82) it is stated that during the transmission of a figure Blackburn did not touch Smith "even in the slightest measure" while the figure was being drawn. In his account of this incident in his *Daily News* statement Blackburn stated that he touched Smith "eight times, that being the only way in which our code was then worked". This specimen of misreporting, he continued, was simply an example of the "many absolute inaccuracies" in the reports of the experiments.¹

¹ Cf. footnote on p. 131.

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The following list is in no sense a bibliography. It is simply a short-title list of books and articles mentioned in the text. Although in many cases the titles are abbreviated, enough is given to enable any reader to follow up the reference if he wishes to do so.

The following abbreviations have been used throughout these references:

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 PSPR *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research.*
 Z *The Zoist.*

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